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# THE OLD BURMA ROAD



ANNING-CHOW GATEWAY

# THE OLD BURMA ROAD

*A Journey on Foot and Muleback*

FROM THE DIARY, NOTES
AND REMINISCENCES OF

DOCTOR NEVILLE BRADLEY

*For many years a Medical Missionary in China*

WITH A FOREWORD BY

LADY ERSKINE CRUM




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THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORISED
ECONOMY STANDARDS

—

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# FOREWORD

MARCO POLO did not write a single word of his well-known book of travels.

He told his story to one Rusticiano or Rustichello, who set it down in a form which gave it world wide fame.

Dr. Neville Bradley has no claim to be a Marco Polo nor have I to be a Rustichello, but Dr. Bradley has spent many years in China as a Medical Missionary and knows the Chinese people and their language intimately, and, with the aid of his diary, notes and photographs, he has told me in great detail the story of the trip which he made down the Burma Road some ten years ago, and I have set it down.

It is the story of a journey made, partly on foot and partly on mule-back, on the same granite-slab road along which six hundred and fifty years ago Marco Polo rode with his escort of the great Kublai Khan's horsemen.

The old order changeth . . . but until the recent reconstruction, the character of the old road can have changed but little.

From its East Gate to its West Gate it passed through walled cities, over precipitous mountain tracks, over deep gorges and swirling rivers, through valleys and plateaux filled with peach blossom and riots of wild flowers or with the pernicious but beautiful opium poppies. It passed by the ancient temples of the Goddess of Mercy and of the God of Murder.

The recent reconstruction of the road has made many changes in the nature of the road itself and is making many changes in its immediate surroundings.

Lest the old picture should fade beyond recognition, Dr. Bradley was anxious that a sketch of the old road, as he saw it, should be committed to writing; and that I, who have made somewhat similar journeys in Kashmir, Sikkim and the central Himalayas, should be his Rustichello.

I have endeavoured as far as possible to give his story in his own words, remembering always that he is not actuated by literary ambition, but by a desire that there should be some permanent record of the remote country people with whom he came into such intimate contact, and a stimulus to those who may wish to continue and carry forward the work of helping to minister to the bodily and spiritual needs of the Chinese people, a people whom he loves as I believe they love him. Their name for him is I Shang (Healing Life).

V. M. ERSKINE CRUM.

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CHAPTER I

# TO ANNING-CHOW. *The City of Peaceful Rest*

*Sunday, March 9th, 1930*

RONALD LANKESTER and I felt fine. To-morrow we were to be off on our eight-hundred-mile march over the old Burma Road, the trade route from Yunnan-Fu to Bhamo.

Our plans were dovetailed like fine furniture, deliberated in detail and perfectly prepared. We imagined we were ready even for the unexpected. It was superb spring weather, and the forty days we had allowed gave us ample margin before the arrival of the monsoon rains, due in June. Our mules and baggage had already started. We were to do the first stage to Anning-Chow in a borrowed car to catch them up on the morrow.

*Monday, March 10th*

THE much anticipated Monday morning arrived—and with it an entirely unanticipated, stupendous and unabating deluge. Just out of the blue—like that. We, like the weather, no longer felt fine. My thirty years' experience of travelling in China left me in no doubt as to what torrential rain like this implied.

If you have but to take a taxi to a steamer or a train, rain can be a discomfort, but hardly daunting. This rain meant that we might have to wade for miles to catch up with our mules at Anning-Chow, through deep, creamy mud, on a treacherous, pot-holed surface. No car could attempt the road under such conditions.

It was most unlikely that at short notice we could hire riding ponies. Though a Chinese could probably have contracted for a sedan-chair with a platoon of coolies, I knew only too well what the answer to that would be if we tried.

The Chinese coolie, before undertaking a job for which the owner of the chair-company may have arranged, inevitably says—not necessarily meaning any direct disrespect—"Let's have a look at the foreign devil first!" One blink at my six-foot-three and fifteen stone, and in a trice there's not a chair-coolie left on the million and a half square miles of China's face.

Something *had* to be done. This was my leave and our itinerary was timed for me to catch the steamer on May 25th

at Rangoon, in which I had booked my berth for England. Lankester, who badly needed a short holiday, had arranged to accompany me as far as Rangoon, and then to return by coastal steamers via Penang and Saigon to Haiphong—something of an adventure in itself—and back by the Tongking railway to Yunnan-Fu.

Lankester was the padre at the Anglican Mission Hospital which I had established at Yunnan-Fu, the capital city of the province. Yunnan Province—Yunnan meaning *South of the Clouds* or *the Cloudy South*, whichever you like—is nearly as large as France, bordered on the south by French Indo-China and on the west by Burma. Across it the mountains, at right angles to the Himalayas, run from north to south, as do the rivers, deeply troughed and difficult to cross.

I had been medical superintendent of the Wei Dien or *Bestowing Grace* Hospital for fourteen years. It served the whole province and included a depot of medical supplies for detached posts. Our work had progressed well, for that part of China had been little touched by revolutionary troubles, owing, probably, to its high terrain and its remote corner position.

The city of Yunnan-Fu, which is situated in the centre of the province, stands 6,000 feet above sea-level, and is 450 miles from the port of Haiphong.

Lankester, like myself, was an Old Reptonian, and was also a man of considerable and venturesome travelling experience. So I felt particularly fortunate to have him accompany me on this expedition. For this was not just a pleasure vagabondage, or a cut across country for the fun of the thing as an alternative to making the three-quarters-of-a-circle voyage round Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula.

Besides the magnetic call of the mountains, and the ever-gnawing appetite of the already far-travelled to see new places and their peoples, I had for long particularly wanted to go to the country through which the Burma Road runs.

This part of Yunnan is famous as the 'Country of Flowers', and I had been told that wild flowers grew there in richer profusion than anywhere in China.

I am no botanist, but the last time I had been in England, I had visited Mr. Lionel de Rothschild's garden at Exbury, and I had been amazed and intrigued to read over and over again on

the name-labels of flowers and shrubs, 'Country of Origin, YUNNAN, CHINA'.

It was the same at Kew, where I found the loveliest of azaleas and rhododendrons had come from Yunnan. I had also met Dr. Rock, a great traveller and collector of seeds, who told me he had sent over 400 varieties of seeds from Yunnan to be reared in one of the San Francisco parks.

I had other very real reasons for making this expedition into the country that rolls up north-west, beyond Yunnan-Fu and Lake Kwan Yang, into ascending succession of hills, plateaux and mountain ranges.

I wanted to examine the internal conditions; to explore the possibilities of the extension of medical work; to visit detached missions and take them medical supplies; and also to get first-hand information about the prevalence of goitre, T.B., malaria and typhus; and to assess the extent of the opium cultivation up to the Burma border. Only during my leave was it possible to do this.

But now—how to catch up with those mules? Four baggage mules with all our gear and our two riding ponies! If we did not overtake them today at Anning-Chow, we had the nightmare prospect of having to toil in pursuit of them for days, they always a day ahead, for, according to the country's custom for transport, we had contracted with them for fixed dates.

It was the first part of the twenty-five miles stretch, from the West Gate of the city of Yunnan-Fu to Anning-Chow, that was the crux, along a recently made earth road.

The walled city of Yunnan-Fu is one of the cleanest and best administered that I have known during my time in China. Its paved streets are wide and well kept. It has fair sanitation and no open drains like so many eastern cities. Water is laid on, and there are electric light and telephone services.

The making of the new earth road from the West Gate had been a fine step in progress on the part of the municipal authorities towards the supplying of the modern communications that Yunnan Province so badly needed.

But this earth road, which replaced the ancient granite-slab track, was vulnerable and treacherous after heavy rain. A native bus service had sprung up, and the heavy vehicles, constantly plying and always overcrowded, had ploughed the road into deep ruts.

In their zeal and delight of enterprise in using modern mechanical conveyances, the Chinese drivers could never resist overloading. The buses—Chevrolet trucks with heavy, home-made, knife-board bodies of timber—ricocheted back and forth, packed not only with passengers and baggage but jammed to the gorge with produce, livestock and merchandise. Bent wheels and axles were more the rule than the exception.

All morning a stream of apprehensive friends called at the hospital to know what we were going to do.

"Start," we replied—thoroughly aware that we were well caught in the machine of our excellent preparations.

Our only hope was the bus station. There we found many of our Chinese friends gathered to bid us good-bye. We found also that all the regular buses had been cancelled for the day. I was anxious, among other things, that our Chinese friends should not be disappointed in having to waive their courteous ceremonies of leave-taking. These were gallant gentlemen, who had worked unremittingly with me, always giving of their best.

Then came a happy surprise. I was informed that a large bus had been put at our disposal by the Government—a kindly parting tribute from Yunnan-Fu, and a great relief to the whole party; for, in genuine Chinese fashion, many of them—Dr. Yao, a medical graduate of Guy's Hospital, Mr. Li and Mr. Wong, agriculturists, and Mr. Chow, an engineer from Shanghai—had planned to accompany us to Anning-Chow.

I was glad that they were not to be left behind disconsolate. We had spent many pleasant times together, and the old national custom of honouring the parting friend meant much to them. The distance a traveller is accompanied on his leave-taking in China proportionately shows his friends' esteem—the farther they go the greater the expression. And these good fellows were set upon going with us the twenty-five miles to Anning-Chow.

We all packed into the bus. The rain continued to pour. The road was of the consistency of batter and treacherous. Despite caution and slow progress, the bus lurched and laboured with disconcerting tail-waggings from back-wheel skids.

After a few miles we became completely bogged. Out we all turned. I felt we were about as much use as Kipling's ivory baby trying to pull a water-buffalo out of its wallow. But not so Lankester. Not for nothing had he commanded a coolie

labour corps in France in '14–'18, and among the many stories we had heard of his prowess, one was of a special occasion connected with some sort of Leviathan and mud.

The extraordinary thing about a Chinese is that he cannot lift any weight with his arms, but he has an amazing knack of throwing every ounce of the weight and muscles of his shoulders into anything that has to be dragged or hauled.

How we accomplished it, goodness knows. We all helped, and after much heaving and levering the vehicle was extracted from the mud bed into which it had sunk.

Once more we were on our way over the plain, dimly to be seen through the downpour. It stretched up to the foothills of the mountainous country along which our path ahead ran, and south in a wide expanse of paddy-fields interlaced by dykes fringed with eucalyptus and cypress trees, their beauty so enhanced in repetition, to the shore of Lake Kwan Yang, *Reflecting Brightness*, which lay, forty miles long and ten wide, between Yunnan-Fu and Anning-Chow. The Sz Shan, *Western Hills*, dipped steeply into its waters, upon which float in spring a foam of frail white water-lilies.

Flights of steps climb the sheer cliffs to temples and galleries hewn from the rock, surrounded with pine groves and decorated with relief carvings of dragons, lions and fat frogs. From these galleries I had often watched the cormorant fishers out on the lake, calling to their birds to come in or go out. These galleries also commanded a wide view of the Yunnan Hsein Plain, with the peasants, both men and women, at work, wading laboriously after their water-buffalo-drawn wooden ploughs; or working in teams planting myriads of blade-like rice plants reared in a 'nursery' at the corner of each inundated field, poking each blade into the soft mud by hand; or garnering the harvest, when the brown acres were transformed into a soothing sea of green-rippling ripe rice.

But today not a soul was about, and even the usually busy road was without the inevitable drovers and pack-mules.

Again the surface became almost impassable. The wheels spun in the mud without any purchase and spumed up foul squirts of sticky mud. We all got out to lighten the load and squelched through the slough, whilst the wretched bus writhed in its attempts to shake itself free from the pot-holes, or slithered suddenly sideways from slimy excrescences.

After eight miles the road improved and began to wind up the slope to the pass. We turned for a last look at the lake and the city, and a last wave to my hospital, where I had spent so many busy hours. It is now wrecked by Japanese bombs. Yunnan-Fu's modern name is Kwan Ming, or Kunming, which means *Glittering Brightness*, and its variegated tiled roofs and temples and pagodas should have been glittering in the sun at this time of the year.

As we worked up the pass the scene became changed and animated; crowds of men, women and children swarmed all about, mostly merely clad, poor things, in home-woven, black or blue cotton garments. Groups of mules waited around, their packages unloaded, while the collectors levied their tribute taxes before the merchandise could be taken into the capital.

Although the Likin was supposed to be abolished throughout China, a toll was levied on everything brought into market towns for sale. There was even a tax on firewood, the staple article brought in by the peasants to aid their meagre livelihood. Precious little they got for it, including the cutting and hauling. What the Likin collector demanded out of their minute earnings I have no idea; but the collector paid for his right to exact taxes by a yearly contract with the Government, and he certainly got something!

We left the shouting, haggling throng with their mules and bundles, at the mouth of the Pi Chi Kwaan, *Jade Chicken Pass*, (why Jade Chicken I do not know), and went through into the plain of which Anning-Chow is the central city.

Now the prospect differed, and the monotony of water-logged fields and treeless slopes disappeared. Soon the East Gate of Anning-Chow, *the City of Peaceful Rest*, loomed through the dense screen of rain. The gate's grey-tiled roof was set in three tiers each with six sides, and overgrown with moss and sprinkled with carved wooden monkeys climbing on all fours with tails up and other lively small fry. On each side the symbols of the Gods of Wealth guarded the approach of the ancient trade route, which we now saw, a granite-paved strip, running under the arch. The Gods, the conventional Lions of China, ferocious creatures twenty feet high, plastered with gold and silver tinsel-foil, squatted dog-like on their haunches and glared at us with round goggled eyes.

Our friends had brought with them a royal luncheon to

honour the occasion, and this was spread in the guest-room of the bus station—once a temple. Speeches and farewells over, they returned to Yunnan-Fu.

Now we were off on our own! Lankester and I set out on foot through the town, seething with a market-day crowd, to discover any news of our muleteers. We were told that undoubtedly we must have caught up with them, as there had been word of them at the pass. Suddenly the rain did not seem so vicious, and it even dawned on us that it might be good for the rice harvest.

We disentangled ourselves from the maze of babies, bedraggled children, women with bundles, mud, men and mules and found the inn we were seeking. Its gay red-and-black sign said 'Chang Yung'. (Yes, I can read Chinese—not the sort of reading that has a glance inside the shop-window and then wisely says the painted puzzle means cabbages or boots.) Chang Yung—*The Inn of Happy Abundance*. It was a horse-inn. I always prefer a horse-inn to the usual travellers' inn, which generally offers but a wretched room with every cranny closed, furnished with verminous bedsteads with filthy straw-stuffed mattresses.

I remember, the first time that I was obliged to sleep in one, being startled by the most disconcerting and threnetic sounds coming from beneath my bed. My landlady, however, merely chid me for being so fussy—it was only a sick pig, she explained.

The horse-inn, with a more pretentious frontage of carved wood balustrades and sometimes stone pillars, and a walled courtyard surrounded by stables, has usually two storeys and a loft. Though the loft is intended for corn, it is for that I always make. We were having it swept out when our muleteers arrived. Up came our camp beds, sleeping bags, washing gear, cooking things and food, with our servant, Ah Yang. As handyman and cookboy, Ah Yang had travelled with Dr. Rock for years.

We soon turned in, and the night struck bitterly cold. We were some 6,500 feet up, and I found my sleeping bag hardly covering enough. The only way to the landlord's sleeping apartment passed close to our beds. A succession of men, women and children strolled in and out to see him till midnight, talking continuously in loud, harsh and shrill voices, so it was not very evident where the *'Peaceful Rest'* came in—but Chinese people are so cheerful and nice, you can't help liking them!

CHAPTER II

# TO LUH PIAO. *Prosperous Market*

*Tuesday, March 11th*

THE rain pelted all night, but at half-past six in the morning it ceased. Our start was later than that fixed for our daily programme, and we did not get off much before nine. We had breakfasted well off porridge and eggs and bacon—excellent bacon of a British brand (which I always took with me on my travels) put up, sliced, in small jars. For, though pigs are plentiful in China, I prefer a British brand to the 'tickling pleasure' of Ho-Ti's or Bo-Bo's crackling, even though, according to Elia, it squared both judge and jury.

Today's stage was short, only twenty miles, so the delay did not worry us at the time.

What had eaten up the hours was a palaver about our joining up, for mutual safety, with a caravan of a hundred or more pack mules. Ahead lay the land of the bandits.

Among the arrangements for the expedition we had had to get permission from the Governor of the Province to travel over the road. Applications were made through the British Consul. The road was not always safe, and we had been warned from some sources of the disturbed state of the country, and been told we were foolhardy to attempt to go that way. By good fortune, just before we wanted to start, my friend General Lung Yuan, the Governor of the Province, had been through the most dangerous area with his army.

The banditry's known headquarters were in the hills through which we had to pass. The official army usually knew pretty well what the bandit gangs were up to, and, unless a certain margin were overstepped, left them alone.

The city authorities, too, were quite clever in their knowledge of the movements and dispositions of the bandits, and were remarkably well served with intelligence about them. The danger sphere was about sixty miles out from the trading centres.

Seven days' notice had to be given in applying for a travelling permit, and such considerations had governed the fixing of the time of our departure. If advised not to start on a proposed date, it was as well to listen, as there was usually an excellent reason. Only a month before the verdict had been 'impassable'.

The bandit leaders were mostly seceded officers of the regular army who, disappointed in securing office of profit and having no trading opportunity in commerce, chose this way of making their fortunes with a view to retiring to another part of the country as respectable citizens. The men of the bands, usually deserters, were armed with Mauser rifles. In fact, banditry was the staple industry of the unemployed and of the unpaid military.

It was a new ploy in my time, for, the many years and over the many roads I had travelled, I had never before been threatened by the appearance of bandits. I had formerly travelled miles and miles, practically alone. This bandit stunt had started during the revolutionary troubles.

In the mountains that lay about three days' march ahead of us, General Lung Yuan had rounded up and dispersed some of the robber gangs who had lately been having a good time with the caravans. The chief remaining band of any importance was an isolated one, controlled by an ex-captain, and this officer might not wish perhaps to invite the attention of the General, and so incommode an old comrade of his.

Apart from the Governor's notification in advance to district magistrates, word of our approach was sure to precede us into the interior by the mysterious and uncanny system of news-spreading which in the East requires no wireless-transmitter.

Lankester and I started on foot, ahead of the caravan, with our two riding ponies and one mule with a certain amount of our personal kit. The animals followed by themselves and did not have to be led—there was but the one path.

The road was neither so rough nor so difficult as we had expected, and we made good time. We were on the old paved way which we had struck at the entry to Anning-Chow. How glad I was to be off on one of the 'granite roads' once more, and what memories it brought back to me of other tramps far afield! These roads, paved with blocks of granite about a foot deep and anything from seven to nine feet wide, lattice the great continent. The longest expedition I ever made on one was from Yunnan-Fu, up an important road north, to Sui-Fu, and across the Yang-tsze, and on up to Cheng-Tu, the capital of the rich province of Sze Chuan. This was the way the elephants used to come from Burma, after having traversed, of course, the bit we were now doing, and the old pavilion that was once the

elephant stables in Yunnan-Fu was, when I was there, the British Consulate.

There is always a vague feeling of romance about a worn stone stair or an old paved court. Whenever I set foot on the ancient granite roads of China, I must admit that my imagination was really stirred.

Much of China's unwritten history must have been stamped in and stamped out on those paved stones. As far as I have been able to make out, they were planned and laid out on the grand scale during the Tsin dynasty, in the third century B.C.

One of the most interesting figures in Chinese history was Shih Huang Ti. He succeeded his supposed father in 246 B.C., when he was thirteen years old. In this twenty-sixth year he became *de facto* master of all China, and ordered that he should be known as Shi Huang Ti, *First Supreme Ruler* or *First Emperor*. Some of the changes he made were puerile, the result of superstition, but his improvements included an order for the uniformity of weights and measures, the adoption of a new script, and the making of great roads upon which he himself travelled. His name, however, is most famous as the builder of the Great Wall, and most infamous as the instigator of the 'Burning of the Books'; to say nothing of the burning alive of four hundred and sixty of the *literati*, about which not so much is heard. For this treatment of Confucian literature he has been abhorred down the ages.

The Han dynasty succeeded, and the Empire was consolidated. Under one of its Emperors, Wu Ti (140 B.C.), overland trade with India, Parthia and Mesopotamia was begun.

'All roads lead to Peking,' is one of the oldest of Chinese sayings.

The old trade routes swept across China like the hands of a moving clock. To Burma, to Tibet, they ran. They flung their influence across Mongolia to the Russian border, through the steppes of Asiatic Muscovy, to Tartary, to the coast of the Arctic, to the Okhotsk Sea, and down from the Yellow Sea south to Cambodia. They supplemented the great intersection of the waterways, the horizontal of the Yang-tsze river and the vertical line of the old Imperial Canal. They came from the gateways of the north and west mountain passes to Peking, whence they starred out again through the Sacred Hills. Traces of the old granite paving still remain on many of them.



OUR CHINESE FRIENDS SEE US OFF



HH MUH KING, MA HONG 'PING, WEARING SIX COATS
Halt in a bamboo grove

See page 16

'Good for ten years, bad for ten thousand,' is the popular Chinese saying about them.

As antiquity gave place to the new, stretches of railroad began to appear over their courses—not always to persist. In one place, I remember, it was as if the old road had won. Money in large amounts had been collected, a magnificent station appeared, and the railroad had been laid—for three miles. Then the money ran out—literally ran—as it passed through the numerous fingers that had had a part in the scheme. The old paved road still held the leading string, and continued to hum to the song of the mule bells and the patter of the ponies' feet.

We tramped happily along. The walking was easy, and it gave us a chance to get into trim for the tackling of the strenuous ascents and descents further along.

Half-way we halted at Tsao Pu, the *Grass Shop Village* Beside the road was a tea-shop. We thought we would try it. It was but a tiny place—a tiled-roofed room. Along the front of it there ran a mud-wall counter about two-and-a-half feet high, upon which shutters were fixed to enclose it at night.

The owner invited us to sit at one of the square wooden tables for four, on hard solid wooden chairs. We decided on roast chicken (as safest against germs), for our host was adorned with the dirtiest apron that I think I have ever seen, even on a Chinese cook. But, as I reminded Lankester, in our own country it was not until, shall we call them the post-Lister days, that surgeons thought it necessary to have their overalls washed. One operation over, they hung up their overalls on the waiting peg till next wanted.

The chicken was tender, well roasted, chopped up and served in bowls with rice and chopsticks, which are not half as difficult to manipulate as is generally supposed. We said "No thank you" to some green-stuff he brought in his fingers to use as garnish. Then came tea. A sprig of tea-leaves, still on their stalk, one in each handleless cup, upon which he poured boiling water, and then covered the cup with a saucer-like lid, which served to keep the tea hot and to hold back the tea-sprig. We said no again to milk or butter in our tea. We liked 'dirty apron', he was friendly, quiet and quick, and we enjoyed our meal.

Little by little a small crowd collected outside, and, as soon as I rose, a wrinkled walnut of an old woman sidled up. The secret Morse had been at work, and the word 'doctor' had gone

round, and I knew I was in for a busman's holiday, for, of course, I could not go on without hearing their stories.

The old woman had no intention that I should. I can understand ordinary Chinese, but it was not easy to understand the tale of the old garrulous, for, in the way of certain old ladies the world over, she was determined to tell it all from the beginning. I knew she wanted to say that she felt ill, but in her peasant's dialect all I could make out was something about a donkey on a hillside and her friend going to market, all leading up to when she got home after the wedding. It was no good trying to cut her short, she had to have her say.

Then came a father and mother with a blind baby girl. No, I had to say, I could do nothing. They looked and looked at me with imploring eyes. Couldn't I do something, give them something? It was too cruel to let them go empty-handed, so I gave them some soothing eye-lotion. To others with sore eyes I gave golden ointment; quinine to those with malaria; a special tabloid for those with goitre; a disinfectant fluid with which to wash and ointment and dressings for badly ulcerated leg, head and hand sores.

A yellow frog of a boy hopped forward. His leg had been fractured. He had been put on a bed and the bones allowed to come together anyhow. No, I had to say again. No. I could do nothing here; but I wrote a letter to the hospital and gave it to his people and told them to take him there as soon as they could to have it straightened. But at a beggar, who would kow-tow (kow-towing always gives me the shudders), I refused to look, and kept my head turned away until he was off his knees and standing before me.

Last came a sweet, satin-skinned little mother with a wise-looking baby boy.

"How old is he?"

"Two hundred years, three hundred years," she replied, with an apprehensive glance around.

I ought to have remembered that it was useless to ask. Every Chinese mother will cheat the devil if she can, and would never say her child's age aloud—the devil would overhear, get hold of it, and cast some sort of spell over it.

They were so grateful. All thanked me, addressing me in the usual way as Sin Shang, *Big Man* or *Teacher*, which they sometimes prefer to the word for doctor—I Shang, *Healing Life*.

We passed through two more villages: Yu Deh Koh, *Desirable Land Corner*, and Ching Lung Sha, *Clear Bright Sand*, where much the same thing happened. As we approached, people crowded up begging for treatment. Obviously the word had gone quickly ahead.

Again we were on our way, and we discussed how odd is the faith the Chinese have in Western remedies. It is the more strange since, as a nation, officially at any rate, they do not attach much importance to medicine. In the towns travellers with European patent medicines sell them like hot cakes, but those in control had troubled little to appoint graduates or doctors of their own nationality to public health work, or to provide any medical service.

I have a fancy that the poor souls we worked among attributed strange powers, unmentioned in the British Pharmacopœia, to our plain tabloids. I even found, later on, that it kept our muleteers good-tempered to give them a tabloid now and then when they thought they felt like it.

There was no sign of the caravan, but we decided to push on to arrange billeting for the night before the press arrived.

We came to Luh Piao, *Prosperous Market*, found a not overclean loft, had it swept out, and put in our gear.

It was lucky that we had some of our own things with us, for none of the caravan caught up with us that night.

CHAPTER III

# WAIT AT LUH PIAO

*Wednesday, March 12th*

NEXT morning there was still no sign of the caravan. Fortunately the inn was airy and comfortable. We spent our time, first in trying to tinker up my camp bed, which was developing an uncomfortable list and an inclination to collapse whenever I wanted to turn over; then walking fretfully to and fro to see if we could catch sight of the caravan's approach. At last we settled down to a midday meal in our loft, surrounded by a large store dump of rice, the family ancestral tablets and a new kitchen god.

Rich Chinese have a hall in which to keep their ancestral tablets, but inn-folk have to put them in their lofts. On the table that held three or four of these up-standing, framed, wooden blocks, carved with the name of the deceased and about the size of a photograph frame, was also the new kitchen god. His predecessor had been despatched at the New Year—in February—with dishes of candy and his mouth smeared with treacle, so that, when he was burnt, he might only have sweet things to say about his ex-home, or that his lips might stick together to prevent his saying too much. Behind him hung a gaudy icon to the honour of Ts'ai Shen, the God of Plenty, portrayed as a sort of Santa Claus starting from heaven followed by a train of servants laden with bounties. Beneath ran the motto, 'A thousand granaries full to bursting'.

Downstairs the usual inn gossip and good stories were going on. Every new arrival was being taxed with the equivalent of the Scot's "Where ha' ye been? Wha' were ye doing? And who were you wi'?" or catechised as to where they were going and why—on business, or to see their ancestral homes? Wild stories were being bandied about of burnt villages, and the numbers and atrocities of the bandits—to all of which we paid little attention.

After luncheon, as we walked still further back, three women stopped us, saying they had heard the doctor was still here and would I come and see a little boy who was ill? Lankester remained on guard, to send word if the mules arrived, and I followed the women.

They were eager to know if I had heard anything of the bandits, for news had come in of a raid on a village further west. Robbers had carried off everything of value—rice, clothing and money—and kidnapped some of their relations, including two fine boys of eighteen and twenty, and a little girl, Shue Suen, *Water Fairy*, of eight years old.

The three women were dressed uniformly in blue cotton coats and trousers, faded and patched. They were strong and sturdy with unbound feet, of the thrifty, hard-working type. They dwelt, they said, in constant dread of the cruel bands who lived by what they could steal. Any silver they had was buried, so that in the event of their homes being burnt, they might return and find it—unless some tortured hostage gave their secret away.

The mother of the sick child led the way to her home, one of a picturesque group of cottages set in a grove of plum, pear, peach and pomegranite trees, past a mulberry bush and an apple tree, which she said produced excellent small apples, Hung Nwa, *Red Flower*, its branches entwined with honeysuckle and jasmine.

In the front room were the ancestral tablets, a round table and several wooden stools. The cooking was done on a stone stove in a small room at the back, and beyond this was another small room. Here I found little A-Fu, *Happy*, lying on a hard wooden bed, the curtains—used either against cold or mosquitoes—drawn up. His little dark head rested on a red-lacquered wooden pillow. His face was flushed, but he opened his dark eyes, and his thin face lighted up with a beaming smile, showing all his even white teeth. I thought 'Happy' was the right name for the little chap. All the sisters and brothers came crowding round the bed, and the father was called in from his work outside.

I gave directions and said I would send medicine, and reluctantly turned away from A-Fu. I examined several other members of the family, gave them advice and promised them medicine.

A sickly-looking woman meanwhile had been brought in and seated on the bed. When her coat was unbuttoned I found she had a terrible abscess. Hot water was brought, and I was able to open this and leave some clean dressings, promise her more, and advised her, if she possibly could, to make her way to our mission hospital at Yunnan-Fu. But what a journey for a sick woman on the back of a mule on that rough road!

It was dreadful to think that these people had no one to whom to turn in their troubles.

As I passed out through the living-room, Bo-Yuk, *Precious Jade*, A-Fu's little sister, was placing steaming bowls of rice on the round table, and a large bowl of vegetables in the centre. The chopsticks were set ready. The little girl, with her shining braid of glossy hair and shy smile—as friendly as the one given me by A-Fu—came and bowed several times before me and thanked me for healing her brother.

Out in the farmyard the women were returning from their work in the fields, their blue trousers tucked up above their knees, and several ponderous, wide-horned buffalo, with children on their backs, were wending their leisurely way into the yard. The father came to bid me good-bye, two ducks, which he had killed in my honour, in his hand, and a thousand thanks and good wishes upon his lips, as he bowed me out.

"Ho hang, Ho hang," ("good walking, good walking,") shouted the children as I proceeded on my way, their hands clasped together and shaken up and down in front of them in farewell.

Still we hung about. Precious hour after precious hour slipped by. Eventually, about four o'clock, twenty-four hours after our own arrival, the mules began to amble slowly in. But there was no sign of Ma Hong 'Peng, known as the Mule King, the man in charge of and the owner of the animals of the large caravan, including our own. Eventually, after eight o'clock that night, he presented himself, but offered no explanation.

I had to make it clear to him that this must not happen again. I had consented, perhaps unwisely, after the arrangement at the outset had been made, to give him half his agreed payment in advance. It appeared he was turning this money to account in a private business enterprise, which involved buying merchandise to sell again at the end of the stage. I had no objection to that, I explained, provided it did not mean he held us up whilst he arranged negotiations.

Of course it was impossible to get off that night.

Later on Ma Hong 'Peng came up again to tell us that there was a definite scare of bandits, and would we come down for a consultation with the travellers and merchants who were accompanying the caravan?

Certain ceremonies had to be gone through, and I was intro-

duced to them as Li I Shang, the name given to me when first I went to China–Li for my surname, I Shang, *Healing Life*, for Doctor.

Perhaps I should explain that on arrival in China it is necessary to call in a Teacher.

"You must have a Chinese name, you see," he explains, "a surname."

The surname selected is usually one of a hundred surnames, the most approximate in sound to your name.

"Brad–Brad–Brad––?" he repeated and shook his head. "Ley–ley–ley?" Most satisfactory, but at once: "Ley . . . Li," and in a moment I found I was a member of a very large family wherever I went. My full name being Li Waai Loi, the last two syllables being the nearest he could get to my Christian name of Neville.

I would be asked: "What is your honourable name?"

To which I would reply: "My unworthy name is Li."

Should it also be the name of the questionnaire, putting his two hands together and shaking them, he would welcome me as a brother.

Lankester was introduced as Lan Muh Sz. Lan for Lankester, Muh Sz for shepherd or pastor.

The Chinese themselves always have three names (fortunately Shakespeare is too modern for them, or it might have been seven):

One name when a child.

Another when at school.

And yet another at the start of life in a vocation.

Introductions over, we got down to business.

Authentic news had come in that the bandits were marauding on the main road between Luh Piao and Chu Shung, four days' march ahead of us. This part of the road ran through desolate and hilly country, ideal for robber raids and quick get-away.

Our best plan seemed to make a detour by side roads, and hope for the best.

We, personally, had very little money with us.

This matter settled, we went to bed.

CHAPTER IV

# TO AN NA. *Place of Rest*

*Thursday, March 13th*

WE were up at four-thirty the next morning, in the dusk before the dawn. I stepped out into the most glorious sunrise. A rosy glow spread until the sun, casting its light ahead over the mountain-tops, threw a burnished livery, a golden cloak to each. Then the sun itself appeared, shooting huge searchlight beams to penetrate further and further over the hills, disperse the valley mists and warm the chill morning air.

Being a medical missionary, the miracle of the sunrise inspired in me the hope that the pioneers of my calling, who, only too few, have started the bitter battle against dirt and disease of mind and body, may only be but the small vanguard of a vast army, who will one day spread the knowledge of Christianity, hygiene and healing, until what is now only the shafts and rays of sunrise may become as widespread and natural as is the sun's lustre over the whole world.

We got off by seven. The ground was white with frost. I pitied the poor peasants we passed on our way, they seemed—many of them—too lightly clad and ill-nourished. They did not wear the wadded and quilted garments common among the more prosperous Chinese, but just coats and trousers of coarse, home-spun, blue or dingy grey cotton; which contrasted with the opulence of the muleteers, who mostly wore six suits, one on top of the other, and leather jackets on top of all against the chill of the morning and evening. The wearing of six suits is, of course, a good way of dressing in a climate such as theirs, in which the nights are bitter and the noons scorching. Better men than they have done it. Old Lord Kelvin, the great scientist, used the same method (much to his wife's consternation). He refused to wear warm winter underclothing, but would pile on up to six summer vests, discarding one or adding one as each uncertain Scottish day's weather demanded, and declaring it was but common sense.

By nine the heavy ground mists had gone, all signs of the frost had vanished, and the sun began to be hot. From ten onwards it struck down fiercely, and we wore our sun helmets

and took off our coats. About half-past three in the afternoon, the sunlight being redder and less dangerous, we dispensed with our helmets, and the mild warmth was like an English summer's day. By 9 p.m. the coldness always crept up, and from midnight until dawn it froze. These extremes of temperature persisted through most of our tour.

This day we kept with the caravan. It stretched a hundred mules long, in addition to the parties of mounted merchants and travellers. The cavalcade was a noisy one. The mule bells echoed down the valley and mingled with the shrill cries of the men, as they encouraged their beasts up steep and slippery ascents, or warned them with odd noises and calls, to be careful down rocky and hazardous descents, whilst the patient, plodding creatures laboured steadily along under their heavy packs.

At one place a landslide had taken the path down the hillside. I wondered what was going to happen, so stopped to see. A muleteer took his stand just below the place where the path had given way. As the first mule came to the place it stopped, put its head on one side and peered. In a trice the man had hold of its tail, and with one twist he seemed to shoot the mule over. This treatment was applied to each animal in turn, until all were safely steered across. It made me think of a clever cox, taking a grip of his rudder ropes, and, timing it to the moment, steering his craft over a surprise rapid.

A mule instinctively walks on the very outside edge of a path cut along a hillside, apparently oblivious of the precipice below him. He knows he must keep his pack clear of stray rocks jutting out from the wall side, for the slightest unexpected bump of his pack against a rock will put him out of his stride, and a big jolt might topple him over. If he does find himself stuck, with his pack jammed, he halts for help. It was a continual entertainment to watch the clever creatures picking their way. The most dependable mule led, the bells round his stiff metal necklace jingling encouragement all down the line. The muleteers say, that the difference between the footwork of a horse or pony and a mule is, that a horse will have one foot off the track and three on but cannot hold himself to the path, but a mule, with three off and one on, will somehow keep himself from going down.

We had two wonderful hours walking, along switchbacks on the crown of the hills. The country was glorious, the slopes

fir-clad, and the plunging valleys gay as a jeweller's counter with vivid emerald rice-fields, golden blazes of mustard, opalescent patches of opium poppies, and topaz orange-and-yellow reaches of ripening wheat in ear. Every possible space that could be turned to use was cultivated on hand-made shelf terraces. Valley and hillside were bespangled with pretty farms and villages, tucked in by tall hedges of feathery bamboo, cactus, hibiscus, rhododendron or azalea. On the higher ground the graceful lines of curving roofs stood silhouetted against the sky. When one came close to the dwellings their charm often faded, and they usually proved to be dilapidated and dirty.

The road had been slowly climbing for some time now, steep and winding. When we were over the top and descending, it was like the turning of the page of a picture paper, the change of scenery was so complete.

Presently we found ourselves in a hollow channel running through a gorge, the track sunken like the bed of a stream, boulder sprinkled with grassy banks above.

At the base of the valley we reached a glade surrounded by pine trees. The caravan halted. All was chatter and excitement at the prospect of food and water for man and beast.

The muleteers unloaded the packs off the mules, and it was fun to see how, immediately they were freed, the mules relished a good roll in the luscious grass. They were given their bean bags, and then left to graze.

A pine-log fire was blazing in no time. Ah Yang brought us sparkling water from a small torrent that dashed and gurgled close by. Soon a kettle was boiling, and we were enjoying some prosaic but comforting cocoa with our picnic.

The men's meal consisted of handfuls of ready-cooked rice out of a large bag. At a tea-house they would have had some unappetising bowls of vegetables added—for it is only the poorest of the poor in China who cannot afford vegetables and a little meat with their rice. As they lay about afterwards, they smoked their coarse tobacco—but sparingly—in their tiny pipes with long bamboo stems and metal bowls the size of a thimble. Just two or three puffs, a pass on and another light-up.

The sun poured hotly down, but we were spared the plague of flies that is the usual accompaniment of a caravan. The cold at night must have killed them off. It was really something to be thankful for, as flies in China can be a dreadful plague. The

flies are not too troublesome in the spring, but in the summer season one has only to sit down in a spot where no human habitation can be seen for miles, take a biscuit out to eat, and the flies swarm. I remember once starting on a forty days' journey and almost deciding to turn back after the first day, the flies were so terrible. They swarmed beyond belief and almost beyond endurance. Plate and cup were black with them, they covered whatever you wanted to put into your mouth, guard it as you might. The problem of how to manipulate a meal without swallowing dozens was a difficult one to solve. Eventually we discovered that the only way was to feed after dark when the flies mysteriously vanished, and very early in the morning before they had woken up.

After a snooze I had a prowl around with my camera, and a look at the packs that lay about. Some of the supplies had come from Haiphong. There was oil in five-gallon tins, two tins in a crate, one crate each side of the pack. There was tobacco in cases, mostly a cheap quality of cigarette manufactured by the British and American Tobacco Company for native consumption.

Even in the interior, the Chinese had developed the new habit of smoking these foreign cigarettes, and sometimes in the towns one would see a miserable rickshaw coolie having a whiff—goodness knows how he paid for it, perhaps he picked it up.

There were large bales of cotton piece-goods going up with the caravan. The population of the region through which we had passed were too poor to use fabrics of European manufacture, but there was sale for it beyond.

One of the merchants came up to talk to me.

"The British are so conservative," he complained. "Not like the Germans who listen to what we say and send us exactly what we want; small bales, for instance, of given width and length. If you British would only send us what *we want*, and not what *you think* we want; 'This is what we make,' you say. 'Take it or leave it!'—and so, though we'd rather buy yours, we buy other countries' goods."

This merchant was a nice fellow. He had with him a large coolie's straw hat with an oiled silk covering against the wet, which he carried mostly over his shoulder. Of course he wouldn't be seen with such a thing in town, he explained.

We called him 'Mackintosh Hat'.

Now came the time to load up. The mules were called and

stray ones chased from a thousand feet up or down the hillside —neither mule nor muleteer objecting to the extra exertion, apparently.

Then the pack-saddle, in two parts, was adjusted. First a leather-lined, inverted V-shaped wooden skeleton frame, with breast-plate and crupper but no girth, was fixed on to the animal. Next, two men held aloft another twin frame on to which the goods were bound with strong leather thongs, and the mule came up between them as they lifted it and fitted it exactly on to the lower frame.

These top saddle-packs, weighing up to 170 lb., were balanced to a nicety, and travelled thus, undisturbed, for the whole of their journey. The muleteers disliked nothing so much as having to repack their 'packs'. They hated our personal loads of bedding and kit that had to be undone and done up each night and morning and that led to more talk and argument than the whole of the rest of the train.

As the mules came up out of the grass to be loaded, we were horrified at the sight of their sore and chafed backs. We had insisted in our negotiations that we were to be supplied with animals with unbroken skins. To our disgust, we found our mules in as bad a way as the rest. The muleteers could not understand our anger, and argued that no mule felt sores or even knew they were there. As long as their feet were all right, they could carry loads anywhere and keep going all the time. It was useless to talk, here at any rate. But I called Ma Hong 'Peng and explained that the sores were due not so much to chafing as to poor feeding. He seemed to take it in.

We noticed the men were making doubly sure of the tightness of the thongs, testing the firmness of one, giving an extra turn to another. We were soon to know why.

We started with a stiff climb, then dropped into a steep descent, and the downward winding way became a rough broken track, treacherous, with projecting snags of rock, and beset with pot-holes and loose stones. Yet I never saw a mule falter or make a false step.

Our own riding ponies, or little horses, were tough and thick-necked, with heavy bodies on strong bony legs; a type which has probably differed little down the ages since the time when Marco Polo rode the 'Burma Road' about six hundred and fifty years ago. I remember an extract from the Elizabethan translation of

his works runs, about Yunnan:—'*and there is brought vp and bredde plentie of Horses.*'

We rode some of the time, and even over the most precipitous places felt confidence in our sure-footed mounts. It was fatal to attempt to guide them. At bad places it was much better to shut one's eyes and hold on with one's legs.

Of course the Chinese thought we were just foolish, the way we often preferred to tramp miles on a good or bad road rather than ride.

We had brought saddles for our own use, country-made of good leather, built on western lines, for it is not as easy as it looks, perching on a Chinese saddle piled up with quilted bedding. I could do it on a level road, but, when the ups and downs began, I always found it impossible to stick on. But the Chinese merchants and travellers who accompanied us all rode this way, unconcerned at any angle, with heels in their stirrups.

Then a mule broke a shoe. Now the muleteers do take care of their mules' feet, and inspect their shoes daily. They are good farriers, and only took five minutes to remove this broken shoe and fix a new one. Fixed cold, of course. Readily available tackle and spare shoes they always have with them, so never find themselves in Borrow's quandary when the Galician blacksmith called him a madman for not having brought his horse-shoes with him. Another mule went lame, off and on, but the men couldn't find out what was wrong.

The muleteers were a great contrast to the people we passed on the way, bigger built and more robust than even the men of Yunnan-Fu. They did not consider themselves Chinese, they said, and Ma Hong 'Peng told me they were all Mahomedans, and observed praying at sundown, but did not observe the fast of Ramadan if they were working.

Their trade was a trade in itself, he explained, a combination of transport and trading. The big men own their baggage trains, and it is usually a family business. The services of the muleteers are included in the hire of the animals. Each team works backwards and forwards in fortnightly stages; at the end of each stage the goods have to be transferred to a fresh team.

One owner is willing enough to contract right through for a long journey; but knowing the commission extracted at each deal leaves the ultimate fellow so dissatisfied that he must be

solaced with a large 'cumshaw', I had decided to contract only for a stage at a time.

When we talked to the muleteers we found the only topic in which they showed any intelligence or interest was the all-absorbing and ever-recurrent one of dollars.

Towards late afternoon we came to a country that gave a pleasant panorama of hills. When we arrived at An Na, *Place of Rest*, we found one of the pleasantest inns I have ever come across in Yunnan.

We were given delicious and fragrant coffee, and, after we had changed our shoes, felt not at all tired.

I took care that night personally to supervise and instruct Ah Yang in my anti-lousing methods, which I prefer to de-lousing. First a yellow oiled cotton sheet was spread beneath the mattress; then a dusting powder of 97% crushed naphthaline and 3% creosote was sprinkled around and well shaken into the corners of our sleeping bags. This mixture discouraged vermin and lice.

We turned in by 8 p.m., and had a room to ourselves—which, like so many other boons, we didn't value sufficiently until later experiences taught us its worth.

CHAPTER V

# TO HOH CHUAN. *Swift River*

*Friday, March 14th*

WE were up at four-thirty and off an hour later. It was pleasantly warm compared with other mornings, and the unmasked moon threw a useful light on the road.

At first our way lay across a wide valley, then it began to rise, and it was hard going up to nearly 6,000 feet. We passed for several miles along a range of hills, with grand views in the morning light of mountain torrents, noble heights, rolling slopes and deep valleys. Then we dropped down about a thousand feet to a river.

A good deal of delay was caused whilst the river was forded. The ford was fairly deep, but every mule managed to keep its feet. We waded through without difficulty, but I should not care to have to do it in the rainy season; but probably the ford was then unusable.

We followed the river bank for some miles, until we came to an old water wheel.

How clever the Chinese are! Anything they make with their hands has such artistic lines. This rough, utilitarian, everyday thing, at a guess thirty-five to forty feet high, was a joy to behold. It made me glad to look at it, as it does now to think of it. An inanimate object, yet it seemed full of life out under the sky in the fresh air.

It was strongly built yet delicately framed. Light and graceful, it was gay with genuine work. As far as we could learn, it was hundreds of years old but seldom needed repair. Acting as a perpetual pump under the power of its own paddles, it gushed its overflowing bamboo buckets of water out to the land.

Humming and creaking it seemed to say:—"I'm doing my best—and you've had more good grains of rice from my tipping than any of you could ever count. Back and back, for years and years, for more time than any man can remember, I've been spinning and swishing, and I've never given any trouble. I'm always here, I'm always ready, I'm always willing, I'm always happy. Men come and go; rice comes and goes; water comes and goes; only I remain—always faithful, always turning, always

humming, always singing and swinging and winding up your water."

The men who made that wheel must have been pleased with their work; and its setting up, centuries ago, must have been to them a marvel of satisfaction.

I was sorry to say good-bye to it, but forward we had to go.

On we went, and eventually found a place to halt by the wayside beneath a grove of bamboos, giving much-needed shade.

We had been on the march for six hours, heavy going, all on foot. We were glad to have a meal.

We went on up a winding course, the roadside decked with many-coloured wild flowers.

Presently we met a tribe of about fifty nomads on the move to new pastures, carrying with them their bundled possessions. Undersized, unhealthy-looking people, their cattle looked in better condition than they. They passed by on foot; filthy children, fierce shaggy dogs and stray goats straggled among the flocks.

We worked over a watershed, and came down a long easy decline and struck the plain. Away, dimly in sight, lay Hoh Chuan, *Swift River*, a fair-sized garrison town; but it seemed to take us a long time to reach it.

So far, all this day, we had not passed a single village or tea-house, which was unusual, for, as a rule, there are tea-houses every ten miles or so along the road.

As we approached Hoh Chuan the road became packed with a market-day crowd, and when we reached the town we found the streets densely thronged.

Lankester and I were soon the centre of attraction, and it appeared from their remarks that most of these people had never, or rarely, seen white men before. Here was a show all for nothing! People swarmed. We might have had as many arms and legs as a Hindu god for the excitement we caused. Word flew to the effect:—'Big barbarians from another country on view!' They left their buying; they left their selling . . . Undoubtedly, opinions differed. 'Some deemed him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad.'

They jabbered, they pushed, they watched our every movement. At last we managed to shake them off when we found our inn.

The inn was large, but it was also crowded and extremely uncleanly.

We commandeered the loft, saw it swept out and went down to tell Ah Yang to get our camp beds brought up and laid out.

By the time we returned we discovered that three Chinese travellers had also taken a fancy to the loft.

They had made the best of our short absence. They were gentlemen we had noticed before and not taken a fancy to.

Number One was already squatting on his bedding, busy with his opium pipe. Number Two, evidently with a sweet tooth, was busy having a good time chewing sugar-cane. He had done pretty well already, it appeared, as the floor was covered with remnants from which he had sucked the sugar and spat out. Number Three was busy making as much toilet as he probably ever made; scrubbing his teeth with a huge tooth-brush (tooth-paste he would think waste of money) and spitting mouthfuls of water from a tin mug all about the floor. (It will be understood now, perhaps, why we were always so insistent about the floor of any place where we wished to spend the night being thoroughly swept.)

We sighed—but that was all we could do.

We sat on our beds and tried to be deaf and blind, and to concentrate on our coffee and brown bread, when Ah Yang gave me a shout from below to tell me he had come back from market.

I jumped up to go down and see him, and caught my head an awful crack on the roof.

The three Chinese roared with delight. I suppose I must have looked almost as exasperated as I felt, for Lankester, with quick diplomacy, reminded me that the laughter of the Chinese gentlemen was, of course, their way of expressing their sympathy. One chimed in with the Chinese proverb:—'Bend your head when the eaves are low.'

Ah Yang had not done badly. He had bought a duck to roast, peas, beans and potatoes, and some native salt to replace our bottle of cerebos, which had been smashed by bad packing.

We went out to see what was going on. I wanted to see how the mule was that had been going lame now for two days. We had her near fore shoe off, and found a nail had penetrated to the quick; we bathed her foot with corrosive sublimate, and the muleteer in charge of her thought she would be back to normal on the morrow."

We learnt that there was a genuine threat of bandits. That same day they had surrounded a small caravan on the main road and carried off everything of value.

The Government had advised us, whenever it seemed necessary, to pick up a military escort, which they were always ready to provide. So plans had to be made.

Hoh Chuan was garrisoned with local militia, called Duan Ping. There was a distinction between these levies and the regular army, though to me their characteristics and equipment seemed much the same. The bargain had to be made with each individual soldier—with the permission of his officer—and the profit was his.

Naturally, escort duty was popular as an interim pay-day—especially as my experience was that the Chinese soldier (at that time) was never officially paid. Pay was the exception rather than the rule. He either served perforce as a conscript, or for his food and lodging, with hopes of advantage over his non-uniformed coolies of privilege with spoils. At that time the army was paid in two events—both infrequent—before an expected fight, or when it was feared their loyalty would be tampered with. An old country saying ran:—'Who pays his troops will come out top.'

There were occasions, too, when soldier became bandit or bandit soldier, willy nilly. When a bandit leader turned the Governor of a city out, he became Governor and his followers soldiers; the Governor then became the outlaw chief and his followers the robber band.

We left Ma Hong 'Peng to make the arrangements—and so to bed.

But what a night! When we went up we found a fourth arrival. All talked all night; all had friends, who all talked and all smoked. What with the clatter, the constant coming and going, raucous voices, throat-clearing, and the pungent reek of opium—it was, well, noisome.

CHAPTER VI

# TO PAO MANG KAI. *Valuable Stone Street*

*Saturday, March 15th*

WE were glad when three o'clock came. We had dressed, packed and breakfasted in the half-light by four-thirty.

We had a hard day with a long march before us.

We got off well and early, despite some preliminary fuss in the mustering of the long caravan. The Chinese Guard—an odd-looking lot—presented themselves for escort duty.

We subscribed our share, paying at the rate of five dollars (Chinese) per load; equivalent, roughly, to a shilling per pony or mule, so the charge did not appear excessive as far as I was concerned.

A 'Duan Ping' is as much like a guardsman as is a worm-eaten windfall to a prize pineapple. They wore no uniform distinctive to the general run of coolies who happen to be clothed. Only a cap with a peaked visor distinguished them, and the cap was anything but uniform—some wore khaki cloth caps, some white cotton ones, some black ones of the chauffeur's variety. For the rest, a ragged once white tunic coat of cotton, and shapeless trousers, mostly three-quarters way down the leg, torn and ragged also. The bandoliers over their shoulders and their ancient Mauser rifles completed the military touch, which did not extend to boots. They wore either straw sandals or, sometimes, cloth slippers.

They loped along in a go-as-you-please fashion as they accompanied the cavalcade, chattering and gesticulating like children. They carried their rifles in haphazard fashion, swinging and pointing them about until we became apprehensive for the safety of the travellers and mules. Most of the barrels were plugged at the mouth with untidy paper wads—presumably to keep out dirt or wet. The bores of those barrels must have been coated with rust. One imagined that if it came to a scrap it was likely there would be as many casualties from burst barrels as from bandits' bullets.

We crossed the valley, flooded in the pale radiance of the full moon. When we had mounted nearly two thousand feet, the dawn broke over the high mountains.

I was not then familiar with Purcell's Trumpet Voluntary—so loved by the modern schoolboy, who frequently hears it played on the organ as a preliminary to service in school chapel. Now, whenever I hear those opening high trumpet calls, it brings to my mind that sunrise over the mountains—a magnificent sight, the sun summoning high peak after high peak to awake.

We passed on through the most picturesque country we had yet seen. We climbed up and wound down through thickly wooded hills. Where the woods broke, framed like pictures by the boughs of the trees, we caught sight of fertile valleys and flower-bedecked hillsides.

Yunnan, they say, is the cradle of the world's garden flowers. It has, of course, been the happy hunting ground for botanical expeditions from many countries for years.

China herself has a long tradition with botanical works, about which I had many talks with Mr. Wong, the agriculturist who saw us off at Yunnan-Fu. Did the Emperor Shen Nung ever exist? Could he be the author of the most ancient 'Materia Medica'? It is certain that before the Christian era there existed in China a medical plant collection. It was quoted in age after age, and then commented on from our fifth century onwards, and many of the names of the plants have persisted to the present day. One work, compiled by Confucius' disciple, Tzu Hsia, and drawings and later comments on this work go back to the Sung dynasty (A.D 950–1280). Li Shin Chen brought together and preserved, in 1596, what was best in earlier works, with over a thousand species of forms and more than seven hundred drawings . . . and so on up till A.D. 1848, when Wu Ch'i-Sun's descriptions were minute enough to extend to stamens.

Through the openings in the woods we continually caught sight of hillsides covered with azaleas. The peach blossom in the valleys was at its best, its graduated range of delicate pinks dappled with hawthorn and plum blossom.

When, later, we passed through arable lands, there were stretches of white poppies, the masses of their graceful ivory blossoms a beautiful sight. One could not help admiring the blooms, although the sinister significance of the great acreage of this drug crop made my heart sink.

The peach blossom was perhaps the loveliest of all. No wonder the Chinese have used it so much in the decoration of their porcelain—so exquisite as a mass, so delicate singly.

The peach is supposed to have originated in China, though this seems a point that will take a lot of settling.

There are three important varieties, and some of the most commercially important strains in the United States were introduced from China. The three best-known groups are the Chinese Cling, the Honey and the Pien Lao. The Chinese Cling is a large peach with a delicious flavour, weighing sometimes more than a pound and as big as a melon. We used to enjoy the astonishment of our visitors from England when, at our home in Yunnan-Fu, we gave them these peaches.

One would have thought, with peaches and pigs so plentiful, the poor should not look so miserable. But the flocks of patients that presented themselves each time we stopped had in no way diminished, and many of the people seemed miserably poor and ill-developed. There were among other things a notably high number of goitre cases, due to the lack of iodine in the soil, and hence in the vegetables and water.

I found that almost one in four was affected with goitre, perceptible or incipient. There was also a pitiably large proportion of cretins. Intermarriage might account for some, or mating relations usually forbidden. There appeared to be much defective mental development, bodily deformity or arrested growth, all in connection with the enlargement of the thyroid gland.

Tremendous work is waiting to be done in these districts, both for the bodies and the souls of these sadly neglected people. Their lot is a heart-breaking contrast to their lovely surroundings.

The mule which had been lame, and which we had treated the evening before, was going much better. But another mule strained a tendon. Poor beast, we could do nothing for it. All the men could do was to relieve it of its load. It was a pathetic sight as it limped along. The men said they dared not wait in this bandit-infested area to find shelter for it. The caravan must press on.

It was hereabouts, some years before, that Dr. Shelton had been taken prisoner and held to ransom for three months.

As we left the high ground and began to descend to the valley where we were to spend the night, our escort left us.

Before they went they made a thorough nuisance of themselves by demanding more money. For a while they behaved in a threatening manner, but, after much vociferation and noisy

argument between them and the muleteers and travellers, they eventually quietened down and went.

On the way I had noticed some of them begging doles from the better-to-do-looking travellers. Before they removed themselves they tried hanging around us and eyeing us to attract our attention—but I thought there were others worthier of our alms.

We ended the day's journey at Pao Mang Kai, *Valuable Stone Street*, a primitive place in the midst of a valley. It was a mere group of huts with a rest-house, with no village or market-town near. Its name did not seem very appropriate, but may have been derived from a legend.

We had been up to 6,800 feet earlier in the day. The temperature was still extreme, and that night it was bitterly cold.

It was a short night but one of most grateful rest to us.

CHAPTER VII

# TO CHU SHUNG. *Lofty Ridge*

*Sunday, March 16th*

OVERNIGHT we had made plans for a very early start. Up by three o'clock, we briskly set to and got Ah Yang to pack our kit, breakfasted, and were ready to start in the bright moonlight.

We wanted to arrive at Chu Sung as early as posssible on this, Sunday morning.

After waiting about for a bit, it dawned on us that no movement was perceptible amongst our fellow-travellers.

We made ourselves thoroughly unpopular in a quest for our own muleteers among the groups of sleepers. One huddled bundle of clothes, with head framed on a wooden pillow similar to an executioner's block, looked so like another. The muleteer solves the problem of adequate bedding on cold nights, besides ensuring the safe custody of his wardrobe, by sleeping in everything he possesses, suit upon suit, a mountain of clothes.

We disturbed a good many, but our endeavours to extract our men from the huddle were greeted by either a succession of protesting grunts or determined statements from those who did reply that the caravan was not leaving till daylight.

We had to give it up. There was nothing to do but wait. So we stood about or sat upon a hard trestle feeling thoroughly disgruntled.

When we eventually got away, our journey was across easy flat country, past rice and poppy fields and pagoda-roofed farms, until, about nine, we arrived at the East Gate of the walled city of Chu Shung, *Lofty Ridge.*

We were now once more back on the main road. Chu Shung seemed a prosperous place, situated in the centre of a large well-watered plateau. It was of a certain importance as being half-way between the capital of the province, Yunnan-Fu, and Tali-Fu, further on our route.

We walked right through the city, which was populous and crowded, with streets of low, tiled-roofed, white or colour-washed houses and shops. No traveller, we learnt, was allowed to lodge within the city.

Outside the West Gate we found a good horse-inn. Though

the room offered us looked uninviting, we had become used to its typical appearance—somewhat after the style of a neglected cowshed in an unmodernised farm. It did not seem nearly so bad after we had had it cleaned out, and there was the advantage that we were to have the use of it exclusively to ourselves until Monday morning. After our recent experience, this was a luxury to be thoroughly appreciated.

As soon as we had made our arrangements, settled our gear, and tidied ourselves up, we went back into the city to call at the China Home Mission.

We were pleasantly surprised in that the first person to greet us there was Mr. Chen, who had worked for us formerly at our hospital at Yuan Yuan, by the Salt Wells. This hospital had been built and financed by the Salt Gabelle—Salt Revenue Office—mainly for their men injured by accidents in the mines or suffering from pneumonia or typhoid. It was staffed, at their request, and the work carried out by the Church Missionary Society.

Mr. Chen gave us the warmest of welcomes. I had not expected to see him, as I had heard that he had gone to Peking from the Salt Wells, to offer his services to the China Home Mission. He had become a member, and had returned, a six weeks' journey, to take up his post here as an evangelist and to help in health work. A trained hospital assistant and capable in dispensing and with dressings, he was an acquisition to the town.

We were just in time, he said, to join with our friends in worship at their morning service.

The congregation consisted of thirty or forty people, and took place in the guest chamber of the Chens' house, opening out into their courtyard. Mr. Chen took the service for the occasion, wearing his long grey silk sham, or coat, which reached to the ground.

As he preached, he fanned himself, as was the custom, with his paper fan. Folded, it served to give emphasis and point to his gestures: leisurely opened, the headings of his sermon, conveniently written on it, assisted his memory.

We of the congregation also kept ourselves cool with our paper fans. When not fluttering they were tucked into hymn-books for markers; used by mammas to tap fidgety children on the head; tucked into the back of his collar by one gentleman; tucked into the top of his stockings by another, whose stockings

were worn over his trousers and neatly bound with coloured garters. I caught sight of one stout party, sitting on a stool at the back, fluttering his inserted fan under his jacket, both back and front, until he felt his legs and arms needed attention.

The service was a reverent and simple one in Chinese. Chen read the Bible; we repeated my favourite psalm, 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills', there were varied prayers (not from our prayer book); and a hearty singing of translated hymns. At the small organ was a blind girl, who proved to be a little friend of mine, taught at the Mission School for the Blind in Yunnan-Fu. This school does wonders in developing any talent the blind pupils possess. I was glad to hear that she was an asset here: and from her that she was happy with her music.

Mr. Chen invited us to dine that night to meet his wife and a Miss Chen, who though of the same name was no relation, and who worked with them.

Later in the day we went to see if we could find an American lady, Miss Morgan, at home. I had been looking forward to meeting Miss Morgan, who worked here in Chu Shung. I had sometimes been able to do small services for her in Yunnan-Fu, and I hoped to have the opportunity of hearing from her how her work was progressing. That she had done much good work I knew.

We found her house, but were sorry to learn from a Chinese lady, who asked us to come in, that Miss Morgan was away. She had gone into the country, two or three days' journey away, to open a new branch of her mission—an independent mission.

The Chinese lady devoted her afternoon to us. She showed us the fine church Miss Morgan had built in the main street, then took us to their headquarters. Much to our astonishment we found that this building was a Chinese Ancestral Hall!—that is, an ancient building where ancestral tablets had long been housed.

I think it is generally known that, according to Confucian beliefs, one of the three spirits of a person after death is supposed to dwell in such a tablet; the second to go into the earth; the third to the air. Here, of all unusual places—for they were still housed there—Miss Morgan had set up her headquarters.

It brought to my mind one of the doctrines of that great philosopher to the effect that:—*Men do wrong (1) through lack of knowledge and (2) from the force of bad example,* and one

of the Sage's many sound common-sense sayings:—*'while exhibiting a comprehensive love for all men, let him ally himself with the good.'*

We were then introduced to a number of well-educated Chinese ladies, whom Miss Morgan had rallied round her, many of them from the North. They were devoting themselves to the one aim of evangelising their fellow-countrymen and women. Some of them spoke English fluently. That they should have come to such an out-of-the-way place showed how much in earnest they were.

We returned, as we had promised, to dine with Mr., Mrs. and Miss Chen. It turned out to be a most elaborate feast—entirely prepared by Mrs. and Miss Chen. There were sugared apricots, I remember, noodles with chestnuts, spiced chicken in plum syrup, pork in flaked pastry, and 'eight-fruit' salad.

Everything was beautifully cooked and served. We did ample justice to the fare, partaking of every dish—except the pork!

There was much to discuss concerning the mission and medical work. It was of interest to us to hëar how their—the China Home Mission—was developing, entirely from Chinese effort, with the prospect of continuity and permanent effect. Really good work, we found, was being done by the devoted workers, their example a fine lead to their countrymen and women.

It was late when we rose to say good-bye. We left with an earnest invitation to stay with them when next we passed through.

The next time we pass through! . . . That seems even further off now than it did then.

Back in our lodging, I, as usual, made a few rough jottings in my diary. I never seemed to have much time to write. That night I sat and thought a bit, before turning in, about our journey up to date.

The contrast of this glorious country—the grandeur of the far-flung mountain ranges, the flowered slopes, the blue shadowed valleys, the wooded hills, the broad landscapes spreading almost as wide as the sky, the great gorges, feathery cascades and rushing rivers, the purple-grey distances, the sweeping panoramas . . . and the wretched lot of many of the people who dwelt among it all. Darkness of mind and the constant shadow of disease and death hung over them, without any hope or motive in life except to get enough to eat.

Any puny effort that I and my friends were making, however much we longed to help to bring the light of the Gospel to their starved and stunted minds and health to their wretched sickly bodies, seemed so infinitesimal compared to their needs. I prayed, and still pray, that the help they need will come, and in my own heart I know that one day it will.

CHAPTER VIII

# AT THE HOME OF THE MULE KING

*Monday, March 17th*

THE Sunday at Chu Shung did us good.

We were in no particular hurry on the Monday morning, as we had only an easy-going twenty miles to make. We were up at six, packed leisurely, and started on to walk ahead of the caravan.

When we had gone some miles it came on to rain; the first rain we had had since our muddy start the week before. We sheltered in a wayside tea-house, waited an hour for our ponies to catch us up, got out our mackintoshes, and, naturally, the rain ceased.

Riding and walking by turn we made our way through a valley that might have been in England, could the dilapidated Chinese farmhouses with crumbling white walls and pagoda roofs have been washed out of the picture. If the peach blossom could have been changed to plum, it might have been between Evesham and Broadway. Well watered, it was packed with promising crops of wheat, barley, beans and the beautiful but evil white poppy.

We had made good friends with Ma Hong 'Peng, the Mule King, during our journey. Quick and intelligent, he was looked up to by all members of the caravan, and had proved not only to be a pleasant travelling companion, but also honest and trustworthy. He had hinted once or twice that he hoped we would visit his home, as it lay close to the main route.

He had come this morning to tell us we should be there this afternoon, and begged us to spend the night at his house. He had, in fact, already sent a messenger ahead to tell his people to expect us, that they might make ready. We thanked him for his kindness and accepted his offer.

At about four o'clock we came to the village of Laho Kai, *River Approach*. Here we left the caravan and Ma Hong 'Peng led us along a track, through an orchard of peach trees, until we came within sight of his home, surrounded by a high mud-brick wall.

On each side of the entrance stood tall sentinel pines. The massive, double wooden doors were open, and, as evidently our

arrival was a delightful entertainment to his whole family, they were waiting to meet us. No doubt having ransacked their boxes, they were turned out in their best.

Ma-tse-an, Hong 'Peng's father of about eighty, the ex-Mule King, came forward to welcome us with kindly greetings as we crossed the threshold—a patriarch, with venerable white beard, dark eyes and toil-worn face, dressed simply in a long blue cotton coat to the ground, under a padded black pui-san, or waistcoat. Behind him, leaning on her stick, was his wife of seventy-five.

Mrs. Ma, in true Chinese fashion, first begged us to excuse such unworthy accommodation for such distinguished guests, and then invited us to come in and sit down and rest ourselves after our long journey.

Behind us we could see Hong 'Peng receiving a warm welcome from his wife and children and the large family circle of his many brothers and their wives and children.

Ma-tse-an and his wife led us through a courtyard, where magnolia trees, with their scented almond-shaped blossoms, grew massed with tall bushes of camellia, both crimson and white, and oleanders with their spiked grey-green leaves and delicate sprays of pink blossoms.

They led us through a round door into another paved court, surrounded on four sides by low rooms, built of the prevailing mud brick, with crescent tip-tilted roofs of burnt dull-grey tiles. In the centre, beside a round lily pond, stood four large stone jars containing camellia trees, bearing huge red flowers, such as they grow in the temple gardens.

Mr. and Mrs. Ma ushered us into one of the rooms leading out of this court, begged us to be seated on wooden chairs set against the wall, whilst they took seats opposite us by the door.

After a short time of conversation, Hong 'Peng's wife, Ma-Taai-So, *Big Sister*, brought in a tray with tea-cups set on small stands, little round lids on each cup.

These she handed round, and, when all were served, Mr. and Mrs. Ma stood up, holding their tea-cups in both hands.

"Yam cha. Yam cha, I Shang," (Drink tea, drink tea, Healing Life), they addressed me bowing. Then to Lankester:—

"Yam cha. Yam cha, Muk sz," (Pastor).

We in our turn stood up, holding our cups in the same way, and bowed to our host and hostess in turn.

Once more seated, we sipped our tea and chatted until Ma-Taai-So returned and offered to show us our quarters.

We followed her down a stone passage into another, smaller paved court, full of blossoming peach trees, and, in the centre, several earthenware bowls, filled with narcissi in flower, the bulbs grown on small stones in water. She told us they always had narcissi ready in profusion for their New Year celebrations.

Our two rooms were simply furnished with wooden beds, chairs, stools and a round table. Ah Yang was busy with our baggage, piled in the courtyard.

Hong 'Peng came to see that we had all we needed, and nothing they could do in their simple way for our comfort and pleasure was left undone.

With a certain amount of pride, Hong 'Peng pointed out four well-made coffins in the corner of the yard, prepared in readiness for his parents, his wife and himself.

There were two courtyards beyond, for his brothers and their families, which, with farm buildings and a large farmyard, completed the Ma Uk, or estate.

Ma-Taai-So with her children had followed her husband into our court. She was a handsome, well-built woman of thirty-five, showing signs of a life of hard work in the house and on the land. The brothers' families pressed close behind her, all faces eager with interest and curiosity.

As I looked at them, my admiration went out to these fine, hard-working people, the backbone of China; the women taking their fair share of laborious landwork, besides caring well for their menfolk and children.

Then followed an uproarious supper. The whole family, who never left us for an instant, took the liveliest interest in everything we did. They were most friendly, but they evidently looked upon us as the entertainment of a lifetime!

The climax arrived when, at the end of our meal, a small girl came forward and offered us a melon. I started to cut it and eat it with a spoon, leaving the rind. This was simply more than they could bear.

"Eat it, eat it like an apple," they chorused, and a small boy kindly demonstrated the right way, to gnaw it, rind and all.

When everything was cleared away, each presented him or herself to have the pulse felt—pulses felt, I should say, for every Chinese insists on both pulses being held and his tongue examined.

I had quickly learnt this lesson, for, when I first went to Pakhoi, the French Consul had sent me his best cook with a nasty cut on his leg. I thought I had made an excellent job of it; but when I asked the Consul that evening how his cook was, he replied, "He didn't think much of you. He complained that you never felt his pulses or looked at his tongue!"

I'm afraid the Mule King had not only completely given me away but added lustre to the abilities and fame of his guest. The problem was that each individual insisted on having some remedy, and a different one to every one else . . . but then, the whole world over, whose complaint isn't totally different from his neighbour's, and unique or superlative?

After an hour we thought it was time to turn in. Our hints became broader but without avail. Eventually we fairly pushed the crowd out of the room.

But it wasn't as easy as that! In a moment 'front seats' were being scrambled for at the window. They had merely gone out to the courtyard and gathered round there. (No windows are allowed on an outside wall, of course.)

We simply hadn't the nerve to undress and get into our pyjamas. I ripped off my collar and coat, and made a quick dive into my sleeping-bag. Lankester followed suit, and the gallery, stalls and pit, the show over, departed.

## CHAPTER IX

# TO SHU CHIAO. *Sandy Bridge*

*Tuesday, March 18th*

WE stole a march on the household first thing in the morning. We got up before any of the family were astir, but had hardly dressed when two boys from the neighbouring village, who had been unable to come near us the night before because of the crush, they explained, presented themselves for consultation.

For one, thick with scabies (like so many little boys who won't wash, or whose parents won't see that they wash), I drew a picture with red pencil on a scrap of paper of a large *S* three times, and told him soap and sulphur (which I gave him) and scrubbing, which he could do, would cure him in two days.

The other wanted me to come and see two relatives: one had rats inside her and the other was growing bristles!

I told Lankester I wouldn't be long. To the lady with rats I gave a pill and, with a gesture, told her the rats had gone out of the tips of her fingers. She immediately felt well enough to go to work in her field.

The case of the old man who grew bristles—though I knew at once what was wrong—took a little more time.

Did they massage him? I asked. Yes. What with? A rough cloth was brought, of a kind I knew was sometimes used. I asked for a demonstration. When they started on him he had a clear skin: when they had finished quite a few pig's bristles were all over his chest. I told them the bristles came out of the cloth. They absolutely refused to believe it. It took a little time to persuade them, and then not until I had demonstrated with the cloth on my own hand. I left them still somewhat mystified.

The Mule King and the Head of the House pressed us to prolong our visit, but after many flowery speeches on both sides, we were able to take our leave. Though we put it in other words, any days we might have to spare we preferred to spend in Tali-Fu.

The Mule King remained behind, as he wished to spend an extra day with his family. It would be another three weeks before he saw them again as he passed on his way back to Yunnan-Fu. Mule King and muleteer, it seemed, led much the same life as the sailor.

When the time came to leave, Ma-tse-an and his sons escorted us to the end of the peach orchard to 'Sung' us on our way, saluting us with '*Ho* Pung Yau' (You are very sympathetic friends to us), and 'Peng on' (Peace). We wished that God would bless them and keep them and theirs from all evil, and so bade them farewell.

When we did get off, we agreed it was a pleasant change to take the road alone, and be free of the clatter of the large cavalcade.

Again it was a morning that made us think of summer-time in England. We continued to traverse the same valley as the day before, but we were glad to see the houses seemed to be in much better condition.

One village we passed through was called Ma Pang Pa, *Horse Fair.*

Then we came upon the wild flowers.

Their wealth and their beauty were simply staggering. In all my travels I had seen nothing to compare with them. In this far-away Yunnan valley, Nature had painted her canvas with a variety and vividness beyond imagination.

What were they—these wild flowers?

I will try to tell of a few.

Wild violets, foiled by the golden flare of the lesser celandine; trailing loosestrife; red sprays of pimpernel and valerian; bronze seas of ragwort—all luxuriant and large-petalled.

But the most lovely of all were the forget-me-nots.

When you think of forget-me-nots, perhaps it calls to your mind the carpet between the tulips; or, if you are a country person, that dainty blue-and-pink cluster you found by the waterside one spring day.

If that is so, then these forget-me-nots were on the scale of the grand orchestra to the harpsichord and the penny whistle.

They poured down the hillside in torrents, they filled the valley with lakes. They were heaven come to earth, of the deepest most heavenly blue ever seen in the sky or reflected in the ocean. They were a revelation of sheer loveliness in their abundance, riots and rivulets. In their singleness, each bloom was large and strong. As I held one in my hand and tried to find an earthly colour with which to compare it, I could only think of a sister flower—the gentian.

That such a flower should be named *Myosotis*—Mouse's ear,

from the shape of its leaf! Who? Why? When?—he that committed such a crime ought to have been struck dumb and blind.

The name of forget-me-not, even before this, had always dissatisfied me—it rings so of doubt, it is not worthy. It is, certainly, one of the prettiest, simplest, and perhaps most pathetic four-syllabled sentences in the English language—translated by Coleridge as 'Hope's gentle gem' and by Clare as 'Friendship's gentle plea'.

These flowers before me I thought ought not to be called forget-me-nots. Their message was a robust command—'Never forget me'—'Remember me ever'.

I thanked God I had eyes to see them, and strong legs to carry me to this land of beyond, this land of such lovely 'secrets that never are told'.

Once again its terrible contrasts overcame me. Here, among all this beauty and abundance, live a stunted and starved people who have no idea, not the slightest conception, of a *God of Love*. They have never heard of such a thing. All that their religion teaches them is the propitiation of the never-extinguishable rapacity of ever-present evil spirits. The idea of evil spirits and their wicked machinations pervades the whole of their lives. Disease and madness are due to evil spirits; death and disaster; misfortune and accident are caused by them. Even in such every-day things as speeding a parting guest, or on such occasions as the building of a new house, the starting of a new enterprise, or on social occasions, such as a wedding, the fusillade of crackers let off, is not a joy token but a necessary precaution to put to flight the foul spirits that malevolently lurk.

Apropos of this, however, I may perhaps be allowed to tell an extraordinary story, rather against myself and my fellow-doctors. In a city in Southern China the Bubonic Plague was raging, brought, of course, by a plague of rats. Everything that could be done was done by us to master the situation, but without striking success. Until the rats were wiped out, which seemed a Herculean and almost impossible job, there was little hope of wiping out the plague.

Eventually a Chinese deputation came to us and suggested that as our efforts had not met with marked success, they thought it was time that they had a turn.

What had *rats* to do with plague? The plague was entirely

due to *Evil Spirits*. Until the *Evil Spirits* were got rid of there was no hope of the plague going.

'Go ahead!' we agreed. They fixed a day, and in eerie silent streets (I must confess there was an uncanny feeling about) they collected and organised a procession which included every available inhabitant.

Armed with drums and noisy instruments and millions of firecrackers (to frighten the evil spirits away), the din they made as they paraded the city was beyond belief.

It was more at any rate than the rats could stand! We all know the story of the Pied Piper. We did not see the rats go—but go they did, from that city to the next!—and the plague with them.

I cannot, however, leave the valley of the forget-me-nots thinking of evil spirits. No. Whenever I think of those exquisite, never-to-be-forgotten forget-me-nots, the remembrance of their beauty makes my heart rejoice, I will take them for a symbol that Heaven does come to earth.

I must not let them drown in their blue seas the remembrance of everything else; for the violets, lavish in their magnificence, were royal and joy-giving. I stood spellbound before their serene deep hue, their rich pageantry of the mossy slopes. Scott's 'fairest flower'. Scott never saw Yunnan forget-me-nots, but if he had, I think he would still have called even the simple violet he knew his 'fairest flower'. But Shakespeare wrote of the 'forward violet'. We are told he meant 'early'—but I seize upon the word to give the wild violets of Yunnan the most forward place in my great love for wild flowers.

We walked on till midday, talking and thinking of nothing but the flowers, until we came to a small, clean city, Chen Nan, *Looking Southward*. There we had a Chinese luncheon, of mien, a kind of thin macaroni, quite passably nice, scrambled eggs and Chinese tea.

After a bask outside the city, we mounted our ponies and rode the rest of the way, through pretty, cultivated country, which had generously responded to industrious husbandry.

There were waving fields of ripe corn, deep stretches of bearded barley, green masses of mauve-blossomed bean crop, filling the air with delicious scent, and the pale lilac and rosy clouds of the blossoming peach trees.

At one place a silver pheasant—a princess in her court gown and train—walked across the road in front of us.

We came to the conclusion that we had seen so few birds, partly because the noise of the caravan had scared every bird away before we could catch sight of it, and partly because the poverty-stricken folk in the districts through which we had passed had killed and eaten anything they could catch or shoot with their bows and arrows.

The cuckoo was calling constantly; we had heard its note ringing out often, all along the road.

The sun was hot, not too oppressive. We finished with no sign of fatigue, and found a room for ourselves at a small horse-inn at Shu Chiao, *Sandy Bridge*. The room was low, barely six feet in height, and I had to move warily, but it was well ventilated and not dark, so we were well disposed.

CHAPTER X

# TO PU PONG. *Noisy Water*

*Wednesday, March 19th*

THE moon was bright and the dawn breaking as we started. There had been a sharp frost in the night, and it was still freezing as we wound round the valley.

The road took a sweep to gradually ascend the heights. In the morning light, the valley below us gave the impression of a picture washed in three colours—green, corn-gold and the ethereal pink of the peach blossom.

As the track became winding and steeper and we passed several hill villages and hamlets, we met many of the women of the neighbourhood wending their way towards the temples.

Today was the gala festival of Koon Yam, *the Goddess of Mercy*.

Dressed in their best, the women wore brightly-coloured coats and trousers. Their black sleek hair was drawn back to a high line off their foreheads and twisted into stiff 'tea-pot handles', and magnolia buds were tucked into their gaily embroidered head-bands. Their faces were powdered chalk-white, their lips and nostrils reddened, and their eyelashes and plucked eyebrows darkly pencilled.

At the temples they would offer incense, sue for the comfort or happiness each particular soul sought, and toss for the luck stick in the hope of getting their wishes fulfilled.

It was a pretty pageant, except for the unmitigated horror that many of these women tottered with difficulty. Their little feet had been bound to constrict them, and their tiny steps on the rough steep road was an agony to watch.

What those poor, misguided women must have suffered! What genuine pity we felt for them!

In the days of their youth, between the ages of five and eight, when all little girls should be enjoying the freedom of their limbs, the process had commenced. Strong white cotton bandages, about three inches wide and six feet long, were used. Wound round the foot to bend the four smaller toes under the sole, so as to narrow the foot, the bandages were tightened every day, causing great pain. The child was kept constantly on the move to keep up circulation. After a year, the ball of the big toe

was drawn tightly up to the heel, to shorten the foot—to three inches if possible—and so arranged that the foot did not form an angle to the leg, the instep bones only making a slight bow. The foot and leg atrophied and the skin shrivelled. Suppuration and gangrene often resulted. It has been estimated that one out of ten girls never survived the treatment.

The origin of the mad and murderous fashion has never been exactly fathomed. It is said to have been started ten or even fifteen centuries ago by an Imperial concubine. It is known that in 1664 K'ang Hui forbade the binding of the feet, but only a few years later the ban was withdrawn.

Imagine the wasted time and the misused energy that have been spent in this ghastly way all down the ages, to say nothing of the suffering it has caused. Think what would have happened if all that precious time had been devoted to the remedy and cure of deformity and disease! If it shows no other lesson, there stands the obvious fact that if feet can be bandaged to grow into such horrible forms, scientific care should be able to ensure correct growth—which, of course, it is fast doing.

The saddest of all in these tragic processions was one young woman who was making the journey with her mother. At every third step she knelt down to touch the ground with her head.

We spoke to them. They had several miles to go. Three hobbled steps and an obeisance . . . Three hobbled steps and an obeisance . . . On and on she went. What grit and endurance! What misguided pluck!

What drove her to do it? Probably she hoped to propitiate some evil spirit . . .

There must be hundreds of girls the world over who have grit and endurance of the right kind. Here is work waiting, work in abundance, work that will bring colour and happiness and hope into the lives of these poor women.

In the great cities, where western influence has already penetrated, enlightenment has reached the women of China. Emancipation from old tyrannies and barbaric customs has taken place, but though the pigtail for the men was abolished (as a badge of servitude), the women in the interior in very few localities have emerged from the state of being treated as chattels.

Even Mui Tsai, the sale of girl children for household work, still continues. There is a school in Yunnan-Fu for some of these girls who have been rescued from ill-treatment.

We climbed on, walking nearly forty Li, about thirteen miles, and then rode three more before we made our midday halt at Iu Woo Kwaan, *Wild Hill Village*. Here we lunched quite substantially at a tea-house, on conventional ham and eggs and buckwheat cakes, all produced by the tea-house. A country of surprises!

On we went again, still mounting up, approaching the greatest altitude we expected to reach on our journey, 8,200 feet.

When we gained the crest, before us stretched a magnificent view 'Four days' march away' as the men called it, on the other side of a wide basin, rose the mountains behind Tali-Fu, the Ts'ang Shan, *Azure Mountains*, a succession of snow-covered heights, rising 14,000 feet. Across the intervening space ran wild picturesque valleys and the course of a great river, its tributaries threading the land like the veins of a leaf.

We stood gazing for quite a while before we started on the long steep descent, where red patches of rhododendrons brightened the hillsides.

We hardly met a soul. After a thirteen-mile descent—a thirty-mile march in all—we reached Pu Pong, *Noisy Water*, well named from the roar of a torrential stream that rushed to waterfalls near by.

This was our halting place.

No sooner had we finished our evening meal than I was besieged with people who wanted to see the doctor. As usual each wanted a different medicine, and there was great disappointment unless each was given something obviously dissimilar to the others.

The difficulty was that here, as in so many of the villages through which we had passed, the quota of goitre cases was large. In this region, especially, the women and many of the children with them seemed somewhat lacking in intelligence.

I did what I could for them, and doled out various tabloids. All appeared well satisfied if pulses were felt, tongues inspected and remedies distributed.

There was so little one could do in the time—but at least they felt happy for the attention, and probably persuaded themselves they felt better.

## CHAPTER XI

# TO YUNNAN-YI. *Cloudy South Plain*

*Thursday, March 20th*

OUR start in the morning was fairly early, for we were warned of a long day ahead of switchback progress before we reached the plain.

At first it was continual climbing, until we had mounted nearly 1,000 feet. We went ahead of the mules most of the way. The morning air was delightful, and for the first twelve miles the ascent comparatively gradual.

We broke the journey at a tea-house, where we were persuaded to try some appetising-looking dainties, buckwheat cakes with a filling of sweetmeats made of walnuts. We really ought to have had the cakes baked, even only for a few moments, to destroy the outside germs. But we were hungry, after our exercise in the keen air, and foolishly we let our scruples slide.

When we reached a height of 7,800 feet, we walked for another seven miles, keeping to the summits of the mountains, from where, all along, we could descry the plain we were making for below.

On the slopes and on the plain, Lankester and I could see many villages; we counted ten big ones in our immediate neighbourhood.

The views from the mountain-tops were wonderful, although it was too hazy to see the snow mountains behind Tali-Fu. This made us all the more glad to have had a clear view of them the day before, standing out sharply from the other ranges.

Behind us, we could see the high ridge over which we had passed the previous day.

We began to descend. The road wound sometimes up and again down, but mostly down. The precipitous tracks were dangerous from loose stones, so we did little riding; both being heavy-weights, if our ponies had slipped we would have been in a bad case.

Up to that time I had only seen one pack come down. It had rolled off a stumbling mule into a field just prepared for sowing young rice—that is, a quagmire of squelching mud. We dis-

covered, with selfish satisfaction, that it was not one of our packs, but, luckily, only one of cotton yarn which, presumably, would be little the worse.

Today a mule got wedged in a narrow, steep, descending defile. It took the muleteers a long time to get the pack off and let the mule up. Nobody, however, seemed to bother much, not even the mule. All it got was a cursing from the men—everyone taking it as part of the day's work.

In many places, in this mountainous districts, we saw signs of outcrops of soft coal.

Ultimately we reached the great plain, here very dry. By two-thirty we arrived at Yunnan-Yi, *Cloudy South Plain*, distinguished as a postal and telegraph town.

This gave us a long afternoon, and a much-needed opportunity to look over our things and make the necessary replacements if possible.

The first thing to be seen to was my camp bed, which for the last few days had been in imminent peril of complete collapse. It was one which Lankester had used all through the last war, and was somewhat the worse. I regretted my own, which had been left, by mistake, in England, last time I was home. The scissor-like folding stays, with the rough packing and uneven floors, had become bent, and the bed would tilt sideways. We had it patched up, and I hoped it would last me out, as I reckoned to have to spend at least thirty more nights in it.

We then went out to have a look at the town. It seemed fairly prosperous, with a population of about 3,000. Though it had a post and telegraph office, it was not modernised, and the buildings were wholly Chinese. Its chief importance lay in the fact that it was the market town for a big area, with numberless villages around.

We saw the aerodrome landing-ground outside the city, not then equipped with any sheds, and had a chat with some of the men in charge. We gathered that it would soon be quite easy to fly from Yunnan-Fu to Yunnan-Yi, with an intermediate stop at Chu-Shung, where we had spent the previous Sunday, and where there was also a good landing-ground.

We talked over the tremendous possibilities there would be for China when the country was opened up by air services and motor roads. We learnt that a continuation of the earth road, upon which we had started in that awful mud, had been surveyed

for a distance which, measured by our present mode of travel, would take seven days.

When that time comes, Lankester and I agreed, much of the charm of the slow travel along the old road would be done away with—so, also, would the nights in the dirty vermin-ridden Chinese inns! Little did we guess what was in store for the Burma Road!

We asked about missions. There were no missions of any sort in this centre. With all its big, adjacent villages there was much opportunity here for an enthusiastic evangelist or Chinese pastor.

CHAPTER XII

# TO HONG AI. *Red Cliff Precipice*

*Friday, March 21st*

WE had expected heavy climbing straight away when we started, but for twelve miles our road ran along the level of the plateau, at an altitude of about 6,000 feet.

We saw quantities of wild duck, bar-headed geese and black-and-white-tufted porchard wherever there was water, for this plain is watered by lakes and ponds more than by rivers. We regretted that we had not brought our guns with us to bag some for the pot, and so vary our somewhat monotonous menus.

The sight of the duck brought up memories of former days' shooting, for most of the lakes around Yunnan-Fu abound with wild geese and duck. We recalled, especially, one Chinese New Year holiday, which Lankester and the American Consul and I spent to the south of Kwan Yang Lake, when we shot a fine bag, consisting chiefly of mallard and teal.

That led me on to talk of the wild turkey shooting which I used to get near Pakhoi (where I lived for twelve years before I went to Yunnan-Fu, and where, incidentally, among other things, I was in charge of the well-known leper hospital).

Those turkeys were fine sport—you had to be so wary. They congregated during the winter months on the marshy ground a few miles outside the city. They had sentinels posted in every direction, and not the slightest sound escaped their sharp hearing. Once the alarm given, they rose in their hundreds, and, unless you happened to be near enough to bag one or two as they rose, there was no more chance of a shot for the whole party until the next morning. One was very popular with one's friends when they were asked to dine off wild turkey, fat, delicious and tender.

After twelve miles the road began to rise, and we looked back over the well-watered plain of Yunnan Hsein.

This plain is the true Yunnan Hsein, *Cloudy South District*, and it is not really correct to call the plain by Yunnan-Fu by this name. The plain of Yunnan Hsein, which we had just left, was probably one of the earliest settled plains in the Province, and hence bears the name of Yunnan. Yunnan-Fu's original name

was Kwan Ming, *Glittering Brightness*, and it was only fairly recently, when it became an important city, that it became known as Yunnan-Fu. More latterly it has reverted to its old name again, cut down by the press to Kunming.

On the march we kept passing oblong chests of wood, left by the wayside under sheltering banks. Coffins!—awaiting a propitious day for burial.

The choice of a burial place is most important—often in pretty groves on the hillsides above cultivation level. The site is believed to affect the future of the departing spirit, and the advice of the 'geomancers' or 'wind-and-water doctors' has to be sought. The principles of geomancy depend on the supposed currents running through the ground, known as the dragon and the tiger, and the best geomancers (who charge a lot, of course) consult the direction of the water-courses, the shape and proportions of the male and female ground, the colour of the soil and the order of the elements.

When the coffins remain unburied, the matter has been either overlooked or forgotten, or, possibly, funds for the geomancer's fees have run out. The Feng Shui (Feng means *Wind God*, Shui means *Water God*) have also to be consulted for many other things—a lucky day to start business, build a house, start a journey . . .

As we approached Hong Ai, *Red Cliff Precipice*, in the afternoon, it was obvious that market had been in full swing. First we met a man leading a litter of piglets at quite a good pace, by walking well ahead of them and then at intervals scattering a handful of beans, the piglets pursuing him in a series of rushes. A bright way of taking pigs from market?—much better than dashing about behind them with a stick. Next we met a fine sow—in her sedan. The basket-work poke in which she sat, and which closely fitted her lower dimensions, was strung on a pole carried on the shoulders of two peasants. The West has nothing to learn from the East? Many a time I have seen, if not helped to coax, an English lady-pig, with a string tied to her back leg, along a lane, while she made it obvious she would prefer any other direction to the one in which the accompanying yokels were attempting to drive her.

A fine caravan of mules jingled by, the young fellows riding them in flashy turbans and light-coloured deerskin waistcoats. The mules, big, well-built animals, were gay with bells and

brightly-coloured wool tassels swinging from their heads.

These were the sort of mules you imagine '*all the King's sons*' rode, when '*every man gat him upon his mule, and fled*', as '*the servants of Absalom came into Ammon*',—the first definite mention of mules in the Bible. There is an earlier mention, that can be taken in two ways; according to the A.V. mules, and according to the Vulgate warm springs. But I always like to think it was mules. It is so rare and thrilling when a new animal is discovered (and the country north of Yunnan supplied that thrill to the world only a year or two before).

The verse I refer to is in Genesis 36. It runs: '*and these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah; this was the Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father*'.

We must have met hundreds of people on their way home from market. One party had piled their purchases on a pack-saddle placed, overflowing, on the back of a bullock.

Hong Ai, *Red Cliff Precipice*, the town for which we were making, where the red sandstone cliffs were quite a feature, was, over a thousand years ago, celebrated as the capital of one of the old kingdoms. Set in another well-watered plain, the abundant crops were in splendid condition.

Our home system of rotation of crops to keep the soil in condition is nothing new in China. It has been practised, even in the remotest districts, from time immemorial. Here they were harvesting the beans, the bean-stalks being buried in the wet, muddy fields as fertiliser for the crop of rice due in the following August or September.

In the town the streets were full. Here, for the first time, we met a number of men and women of the Tibetan type, largely built, well-dressed, healthy-looking and fairly clean. The women were in striking contrast to the women we were accustomed to see, gaudily clad, with fantastic head-dresses of many plaits and coral and turquoise ornaments. There were Lamas, too, in their red-and-yellow robes with their bead rosaries.

In the open-air market and surrounding booths, masses of all sorts of merchandise were changing hands: things to eat, things for household use and things to wear. Amongst the other garments were both European socks and country-made socks of sewn-up material.

A fancy stall displayed dominoes made of buffalo horn or

glazed cardboard, little iron marbles, paper lanterns, umbrellas and kites, fans and fire-crackers. A blind fiddler twanged his guitar; a juggler and his performing monkey had a cheery audience; a little yellow coolie boy sat by himself, singing out of a song-book at the top of his voice.

A circle was collected round two Tibetan girls dancing to the tunes of a Tibetan musician. Their bright full-pleated skirts swirled, their coral-and-turquoise ear-rings bobbed, as they pirouetted round and round, clapping their beringed hands. Then they changed to a slow rhythm, advanced and retreated towards one another, all the while droning an endless song.

Another crowd had collected around a professional story-teller. He was dressed in a long dark blue coat, and had selected as quiet a corner as he could find. I was struck by the tense look in his upturned face with the flickering sunlight and shadow playing on it. He strummed on his lyre, whilst the motley throng waited for the entertainment they love so well. Presently he started to sing an historical drama of bygone days. His high vibrating falsetto voice penetrated the air, a quavering long-drawn-out note heralding any pause, whilst he twanged his instrument and gathered breath before he started shrill and high again. When we passed two hours later he was still at it.

This day we had actually finished one-third of our march between Yunnan-Fu and Bhamo.

The magnificent Ts'ang Shan mountain range here rose 10,000 feet around us. Tomorrow we would be in Tali-Fu!

In the rough diary I kept, my record for the day ended on a happy, expectant note. I should have guarded my pen!. I made no entry on the next day.

CHAPTER XIII

# TO 'A PLACE WHERE WE COULD STAY'

*Saturday, March 22nd*

I WOKE at 2 a.m. in the Hong Ai inn feeling extremely ill. I realised, of course, that at the depressing hour when resistance is lowest, I was magnifying things—but I began to make preparations in my mind for what might be the worst, and to plan what ought to be done. In the East things happen so quickly.

The physician is always diffident as to self-diagnosis, but I knew I was a very sick man. When we dressed at three-thirty I did not feel fit enough to shave.

I could not make out exactly what was wrong. I decided that I must go on, taking things as easily as possible. I started on my pony, instead of on foot as usual, which was as well, for soon the road climbed steeply, up and up, and up again, until we reached the top of the pass 1,600 feet above Hong Ai.

At the summit I tried to walk a little, but it was impossible. There was no doubt but that I had developed a nasty attack of a certain type of cholera.

Whether the walnut cakes were responsible or whether I had picked up a germ elsewhere, it was impossible to say.

I got weaker and weaker and could hardly keep my saddle. Still we must carry on. We could not stay where we were. It was useless to return to Hong Ai. We had planned to spend Sunday in Tali-Fu, but now, though improbable, we hoped to find a place where we could stay, short of the full day's march to Tali-Fu.

Ronald Lankester did everything that a kind friend could do. He and Ah Yang managed to get boiling water several times to make milk with Klim powder to give me. How thankful I was to have Lankester with me!

Cholera, at the time of which I am speaking, held only a small percentage of the terror it wielded even a few years before. A doctor, armed with simple instruments and the knowledge of the almost certain cure given us by the labours of Sir Leonard Rogers, should gain the mastery every time. I had told Lankester and Ah Yang what to do if I became much worse, but Lankester was not a doctor and we were on a mountain-top.

What scenes of desolation and despair the very word cholera brought to my memory! There was that tragic day at Pakhoi when cholera carried off seven British officers from merchant ships in the harbour. And I remembered the first serious outbreak with which I had to cope, when healthy men, taken suddenly ill, were dead in a few hours and almost unrecognisable, owing to the tremendous drain of fluid from the tissues. Seventy-five per cent of the cases proved fatal.

The battle to find a cure was long. How were we going to win? We could not answer, though experiment after experiment was tried. Cholera always triumphed and slew its victim. As in so many long wars, victory came suddenly.

Sir Leonard Rogers discovered that the transfusion of saline water (without any drug) through a vein, up to six pints or even more, substituted the lost fluid and enabled the patient to hold his own against the germ. If I were to state here the actual amount I have transfused into a patient, many would say it was impossible. Even with very far-gone cases this treatment is successful.

I was called one night to a case where the Chinese nurse I had taken with me and I found the patient already laid out on the floor (Mother Earth)—so that the rest of her after-life would not be spent on a bed. Her grave-clothes, that is, her best clothes, were ready.

After one glance I said—hopeless. I felt her pulse, and shook my head. Her relations begged me to do something, and the nurse, a Christian and a trusted and experienced nurse, whispered to me:—"Remember, Li I Shang, what miracles have already been wrought. Let us ask God to help us and bless the treatment and try."

In the dimly lighted room, with the woman on the floor, her kin crowding round, silence fell while we prayed a few earnest words asking God's help. Everything had become so shrunken I had difficulty in finding the vein: but I did find it and allowed the saline to go slowly in. The colour came back to the woman's face, her pulse gradually became perceptible, and after six pints we felt we could do no more. Next morning the woman was brought to hospital out of danger.

So great has become the faith in this treatment that I have had to turn away from the hospital men and women who were brought to me already dead.

I rode and rested, rode and rested, through the weary hours: the men hoisting me into my saddle and taking turns to see that I didn't fall off.

When my mind was not a blank, there were three things that worried me. It was not that I feared death: but I didn't want to die just then. I was harassed at the thought of what a nuisance it would be to Lankester; I wanted to get to England to see my wife, daughter and five sons; and I had a project about raising funds to buy land for the lepers to cultivate for themselves outside Pakhoi. I remember how these things went round and round in my head.

At last we came to a small place, I haven't the least remembrance of what it was like, where Lankester and Ah Yang thought it would be possible to stay.

It was a blessed relief to lie down.

CHAPTER XIV

# TO TALI-FU. *Good Ferry*

*Sunday, March 23rd*

AFTER a bad night at the wayside inn, I was determined at all costs to get on the road again. With an enormous effort I left my bed. Lankester, the embodiment of patience and kindness, agreed it was best to try to get to Tali-Fu and decent accommodation.

You can't make good time on inferior coal, and we crawled along.

After about an hour we came in sight of the Ts'ang Shan snow mountain range, majestic and towering 7,000 feet above Tali-Fu. In the brilliantly clear air, the snow's silvery white masses, sapphire in the shadows, were reflected in Lake Erh Tai, *the Sapphire Sea,* at the giant's feet.

Sick as I was, the glory revived me, and I went on in better heart.

We reached Tali-Fu, *Good Ferry,* in the late morning. The fifteen miles had taken us five hours. The British American Tobacco Company, who had been advised in advance of our coming, had rooms engaged ready for us.

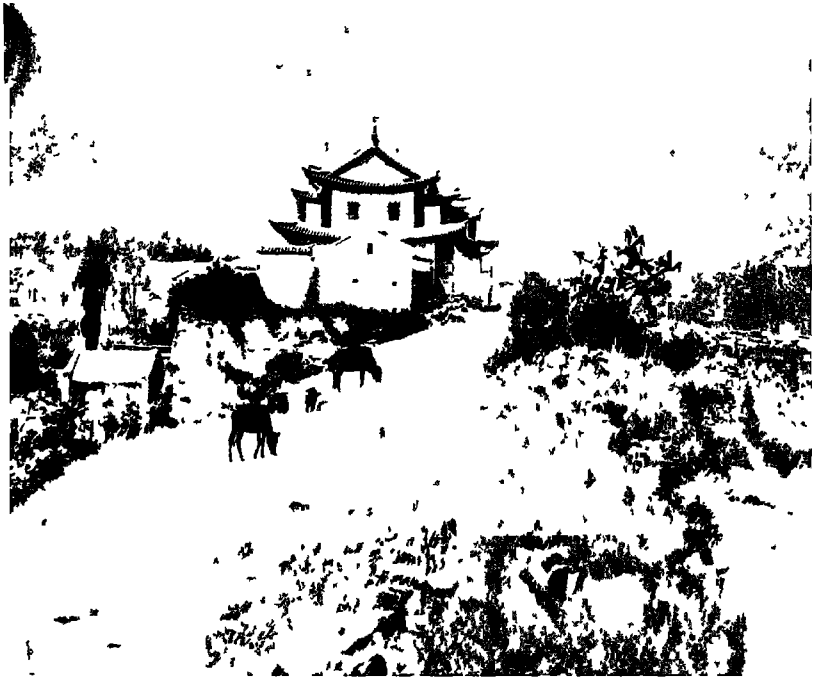
By that evening I felt greatly recuperated, and thankful that nothing serious had developed. A good night's rest in comfortable quarters, free from flies, fleas and curious eyes, and I knew that tomorrow I would be ready for anything.



WATER WHEEL



TEA IN A PRIMITIVE TEA HOUSE with Mackintosh Hat and fellow travellers



ON TALI-FU CITY WALL

The Azure Mountains in the background

CHAPTER XV

# AT TALI-FU

*Monday, March 24th*

BY Monday morning I felt much better, and was bent on enjoying our two days' stay at Tali-Fu.

We had three calls to make: on the agent of the British American Tobacco Company (B.A.T., as it is called in the East): on the China Inland Mission: and on the Salt Revenue Office.

There was no 'foreigner' (as Europeans are called in China) at the B.A.T.; but the Chinese in charge, who had been advised of our coming and had engaged our rooms, undertook to find mules for Wednesday

Nor was there a 'foreigner' at the Inland Mission, where Mr. Hanna—with whom for long I had been in intimate touch—had done such first-rate work. He had now left, but he had left behind him a well-built church, meeting room, school, residence and dispensary. The Chinese pastor was away. We had unfortunately hit upon a quiet interim, though later we heard that everything was in full swing again.

We took our letter of introduction to the Assistant Inspector in Charge of the Salt Revenue Office. Mr. Wong, alert and well-educated and not long from Peking, received us cordially and invited us to dine that night.

In the afternoon we went out on the city wall.

Tali-Fu, in the days of the Old Empire, stood as the last stronghold before the west frontier, guarded mountain passes only beyond. The city wall, substantial, twenty feet high, built of stone and grey brick—possibly a thousand or even two thousand years old—remained four square though battered by Mahomedan hordes and earthquakes.

Buttressed with earth from the inside, the top of the wall was easy of access. We wandered along it in a track as wide as a cartroad, overgrown with grass and shrubs and adorned with donkeys and ducks and other odds and ends, as far as the Little South Gate. All cities have a North, South, East and West Gate, and if they need more to deal with the traffic these become the Little North, Little South and so on according to location.

The gate-house, a temple-like building, stood high on the wall, straddling the gate beneath.

Above, the blue snow-tipped mountains floated gauzy veils of cloud. The blue lake, running twenty-five miles away north, here three miles wide, was sprinkled with brown matting-sailed junks, and behind us the blue was picked up again in the towering roofs of the city pagodas.

How the high slender pagodas had withstood earthquake shocks when so much of the city lay in ruins was a marvel. The solution lay probably in their excellent building as against the flimsily erected dwellings.

Once the capital of Yunnan, now only the second city, Tali-Fu could in no way compare with the new capital, Yunnan-Fu.

The earthquake of '25 had caused much disaster and little had been done in the way of tidying up. Piles of rubble still lay about, giving it a 'badly bombed' appearance. In an atmosphere of slovenly neglect lassitude reigned. The spirit of the people was one of complete apathy—not to be wondered at when from eighty per cent of the doorways was wafted the reek of the poppy pipe, opium so cheap that poor as well as rich could indulge.

Set some miles back from the Burma Road, Tali-Fu, though on an important road to the north and in spite of its fine situation, fresh mountain air, and former history, had fallen into a lethargy from which it seemed unlikely ever to stir.

"Perhaps when air traffic brings communication with outside activities it will jerk back to life," we said. "What the Talifutians need is something—not an earthquake—to shake them up a bit."

To shake them up a bit!

Who could have then foretold that in a few years' time, as the result of the Japanese war, the greatest migration in history would have taken place?

It is estimated that forty million Chinese have evacuated from the occupied areas to the western provinces of Kwei Chow, Yunnan and Sze Chuan. Whole universities moved with their faculties, medical schools, skilled agriculturists and engineers. Many of them found sanctuary in Tali-Fu and brought with them the culture of Peking, Soochow, Hankow and other great cities. The bulk of the forty million, small shop-keepers, peasants and farmers, managed to be settled somehow in these provinces,

to which in the olden days when the Emperor wished to give someone an 'Irishman's rise' he banished the unfortunate.

On our arrival at Mr. Wong's at five that evening, we were received at the door by a servant, but our genial host came at once to meet us and ushered us—with polite speeches of how glad he was to see us and how kind of us it was to come—into the typical guest-room with its rows of chairs on either side.

He introduced us to Mr. Ling and Mr. Chen, two travelled and well-informed gentlemen, co-hosts with himself.

All were dressed in long grey-blue cotton coats with braided loops and buttons at the side, over which they wore black, brown or dark blue sateen waistcoats. On their heads were black satin skull-caps with braided buttons on top. Their trousers were bound with black satin ankle putties. On their feet were cloth shoes with half-inch cloth soles. Our host and Mr. Ling—an English-speaking secretary from the Salt Gabelle and a devout Christian—wore the fashionable spectacles, either to improve their appearance or for short sight.

Mr. Wong asked us to sit at the far end of the room. The chairs, highly polished blackwood a little out of the ordinary, had their centre panels carved with conventional flowers. With correct etiquette he took his place between us and the door —to prevent the escape of any of his guests. He had invited to meet us the Father Superior of the Roman Catholic Mission and a young Belgian Father recently out from Europe.

During small talk menservants brought us each a bowl of mein —representing long life—and set it on the elbow-high table between each chair. Mein, eaten with chopsticks, is a kind of hors-d'œuvre I always enjoy.

After half-an-hour we moved to another room. The guest of honour opposite him, Mr. Wong again took the seat nearest the door. Chopsticks of ivory, a little china ladle, and a small dish containing a sauce something like Worcester sauce, were already set for each person on the round table, with numerous cold dishes of ham, cut in slices the size of a mouthful, vegetables and melon seeds.

With melon seeds I always had difficulty. The Chinese pop them into their mouths, crack the seed cleverly, blow the skin out on to the floor and scrunch the kernel. I split mine with difficulty, pulled the skin off with my fingers and, out of polite-

ness, also dropped it on to the floor—where everything is put that you can't swallow once it has been in your mouth.

Then the meal began in earnest, sent in from a restaurant. It is most unusual to have a 'feast' prepared and cooked at home as we had at the Chens'.

A bowl of rice was served to each person, and each of the ten courses consisted of a steaming hot dish placed in the centre of the table—sharks' fins (an expensive delicacy, dried and put up and obtainable at most restaurants), birds' nest soup, stuffed chicken, young bamboo shoots . . . and oh!—a sort of trout from the lake, which led me to ask if it was a descendant of the 'Loch Ness Monster' Marco Polo talks about.

Our host commenced by saying "Please eat", and dipped into the centre bowl with his chopsticks, both, of course, held in one hand. We did the same, but not with the same skill. When he saw me in difficulties, perhaps aiding myself with my spoon and bowl, in the most friendly way he picked out a choice morsel with his own chopsticks, rose, leant across the table, and popped it into my mouth.

I knew the secret of enjoying a Chinese meal and ate very sparingly of each dish, all apparently cleanly served, hot, appetising and even delicious.

Laughter and friendly talk made the party go with a swing. The Chinese are extremely quick at knowing whether you yourself feel friendly towards them and respond in a charming way.

After dinner our three hosts offered to play Chinese orchestral music to us! It was the first time I had ever heard Chinese amateurs playing together. It was most attractive and diverting.

"Our music is a great delight to us," said Mr. Wong. "It has become part of our daily lives. It is a balm and adds interest to our routine. It gives us a sensation of well-being—there is magic in music that dispels monotony and helps to rouse us to greater physical and mental effort. It binds us together with its messages of harmony and beauty and so creates good will."

Whilst in Peking, he told us, he had made a collection of old musical instruments and had brought a few with him. Would we care to see them—one specimen of each of the eight different kinds?

To our immense interest he exhibited, one at a time:—a marble and jade flute—"stone"; bells—"metal"; a fiddle covered with snakeskin—"stringed"; a flute twenty-six inches long—"bamboo";

a wooden crouching tiger about two feet long and a row of teeth on its back over which a stick was rapidly passed—"wooden"; a drum with a rattle inside—"skin"; a cone of porcelain with a blow-hole at the top, three holes in front and one behind—"clay"; and a reed organ, a gourd of wood the size of a finger-bowl with seventeen tubes and a mouthpiece—"gourd", adding: "they say that an instrument like this was the original model from which the accordion of Europe was evolved".

I do not think I have spent a more delightful evening in a Chinese house.

After saying good-bye to our hosts, nothing would please the Roman Catholic Fathers but that we should return with them to their Mission House for coffee.

Here we found seven more Fathers, four just out from France. One spoke fluent English, he came from Lourdes, and when I told him I knew Carcassone and the South of France we found much in common to talk about. Çomradely and ready to exchange views and experiences, they told us about the church they were building, the school they maintained and other activities on which they were engaged, and they played their gramophone to entertain us.

As we made our way back to our rooms, Lankester and I realised what an illuminating hour this had been and how much we had benefited from our intimate contact with these Roman Catholic priests, comparing notes about our mutual work.

The extraordinary thing was that—our French being poor and only one of the priests being able to speak English—the bulk of the conversation had been carried on in Chinese.

CHAPTER XVI

# AT TALI-FU

*Tuesday, March 25th*

ON Tuesday morning I rose late. Though much better, I was still not too fit.

Ah Yang was having a grand time washing our clothes, a job he seized upon whenever we stayed more than one night.

About thirty-five, an ugly morose-looking fellow, he could smile, even laugh, now and then. He had done us well. Dr. Rock, a particular American, had trained him, and he never had to be told anything. On our arrival at our destination for the night, he either got the place swept or did it himself, went off to market, and cooked quite a good meal.

He got himself up in an old Homburg, a size too large for him with the crown full up, and a grey tweed waistcoat, given him by Dr. Rock, of which he was very proud and which he wore outside his white cotton coat. He was prepared to walk the whole way in his felt slippers, his wrinkled woollen socks pulled up over his trousers. It always pleased him when we made him ride one of our ponies. Occasionally he made himself smart in boots and putties. He always had extra coats, like the muleteers, handy for what he called 'two-coat, four-coat, or six-coat weather'.

As I was dressing that morning he came from his wash-tub to offer assistance.

Looking at me through narrowed black slits with a smile that revealed large prominent teeth, his high cheek-bones gleaming yellow with sweat, he addressed me in his best manner.

"This Panda Giant, what he belong like, I Shang?"

I could hardly believe my ears!

"What do *you* know about the Giant Panda?" I asked.

"I with Dr. Rock when Mr. Theodore and Mr. Kermit Roosevelt meet Dr. Rock topside of Tali-Fu Lake last year, going look for wild beast," he replied. "I hear afterwards, Yunnan-Fu side, their way home, they have got! But what sort of giant this creature?—very large, very fierce, very big and hungry like demon? I do ever hear."

"Ah Yang," I said, "I, too, thought like you, when the Mr.

Roosevelts came through Yunnan-Fu with the news that they had bagged a Giant Panda, that it was some fierce big animal. But no! It is a shy little white bear with black markings—like snow in sunshine and shadow, camouflaged we call it, just like the country it lives in. It eats young bamboo shoots and isn't at all fierce, only rare," and I explained that no white man had ever seen one alive before.

This amused Ah Yang immensely. "And all this time I thinking of terrible dragon!" he laughed. Then changing the subject:

"I Shang, see!" he exclaimed, "Grand funeral going by with horse!"

At that moment our landlord came up to ask if I had all I needed, as he wished to join the funeral procession.

He showed me the funeral card he had received, containing among other things the dates of the birth and death of the deceased and the number of his children. The invitation was for a future date, to a reception of friends to worship the spirit of the departed. He had already sent his small offering of money to the bereaved family to assist in the purchase of candles, joss-paper and incense for the ceremony.

The procession was headed by a musician playing a discordant flageolet, and in the midst of the white-hooded, sackcloth-clad mourners, was being carried a life-sized paper horse. Evidently a horsy man, the deceased was being provided with this horse, which would be burnt, that he might not lack a mount in his after-life.

Then Ah Yang made the only funny remark I ever heard him utter—but to this day I have not decided if it was intended to be humorous. He had evidently been turning over my description of 'the little white bear' in his mind.

"I Shang," he said, "if Mr. Roosevelts were this country's religion and died here, I think they have a giant little white bear in their funeral procession, so they have plenty Pandas about them in after-life!"

I was indeed tickled. Ah Yang joined in my laughter. I told him they certainly would have lots of paper expended in books written about it, and all the world would know, now and in ages to come, that they were the discoverers of this 'new' animal.

"Better paper books than a paper Panda to burn," he said, nodding wisely.

But Lankester was calling to me to hurry.

We had a very unusual engagement to fulfil.

Ronald Lankester had been commissioned by the B.A.T. agent in Yunnan-Fu to superintend on their behalf the destruction of a quantity of cigarettes, reported damaged. When we had called on the local agent on Monday, who had received instructions as to Lankester's authority, he had fixed the burning for ten o'clock this morning.

There were a hundred thousand of deteriorated stock to be destroyed! The Chinese evidently did not like to see so much material burned, which might be 'traded' and sold off at a lower price. But the B.A.T. were adamant about putting doubtful quality goods under their 'chop' or brand on any market. Hence they had commissioned Lankester to see for himself that they were destroyed.

A bonfire of the cigarettes was built and set ablaze: but it took nearly two hours to burn sufficiently to be sure that all the tobacco was beyond recall. What the worth was of the cigarettes consumed, in that biggest 'smoke' that I have ever witnessed, had they been in good condition, I do not know. It could hardly have been less than two hundred pounds' worth!

The difficulty in arranging for mules for a long stage could not be overcome at Tali-Fu. We wanted to go on ourselves on the morrow, Wednesday, to Hsia Kwan, *the Town of the Lower Pass*, on the main road south of Tali-Fu. The Upper Pass was at the north end of the lake, on the road up to Sze Chuan, the two ancient guarded mountain passes of the city.

We had been invited by our fellow-traveller in the caravan, the Chinese merchant whom we called Mackintosh Hat, to stay the night with him at his house in Hsia Kwan.

We decided to walk the nine miles, sight-seeing on the way, as the district round Tali-Fu is scattered with ancient temples and pagodas. The best arrangement we could make for our baggage, even with the help of the B.A.T. agent, was that it should leave very early on Thursday morning by 'local carrier' mules, arriving early enough for us to transfer it to fresh mules. These, we were told, we ought to have no difficulty in engaging at the busy centre of Hsia Kwan, in time to set out again on Thursday morning. With that we had to be satisfied.

CHAPTER XVII

# TO HSIA KWAN. *The Town of the Lower Pass*

*Wednesday, March 26th*

WE set out on foot about eleven o'clock. As we left the city, cheery arriving Tibetans—their mules almost extinguished under bulging bundles—shouted the greetings of the road to us. Unkempt but showily clad, the men in conical hats, coatees, and full baggy trousers, as brightly coloured as their women's clothes, they made a gay picture.

Between the mountains and the lake, the valley, down which we made our way towards the Southern Pass, was bestrewn with marble tombs, temples and pagodas. The Ts'ang Shan Range, thick with marble quarries, provided industry to the whole countryside. The marble—white, and unevenly veined with black, grey, brown, green, yellow and red—was polished and worked up and sent all over China.

We loitered along, lingering here and there to visit various temples. The most beautiful was a marble pagoda dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy.

A two-storeyed pagoda, its base was a square central recess, a shrine, which framed a solid slab of rock carved in bas-relief. Legend said that this rock was a meteorite. The shrine was surrounded by graceful arches upon which rested a gallery, reached by flights of steps. The gallery was enclosed by a beautifully carved balustrade. In the centre of the gallery, and immediately over the shrine, stood the pagoda, lavishly ornamented.

Here, on festival days—as on the one when we had seen the women of the bandaged feet making their pilgrimage—the waiting, worshipping crowd would assemble, their hands clasped as they swayed with rhythmic bowings. The priest would strike a gong to attract the Goddess's attention. In a tense atmosphere, thick with incense fumes from the smoking sticks in the bowl before the candle-lit shrine, the priest would read to the breathlessly expectant throng from the slip of paper that the lucky lot had won, such messages as:—'Yours is a happy home, a son will come. Increase, wealth and honour will be yours. Pray to Koon Yam, and sickness will depart from your house.'

In another small temple we had been told we must visit, we

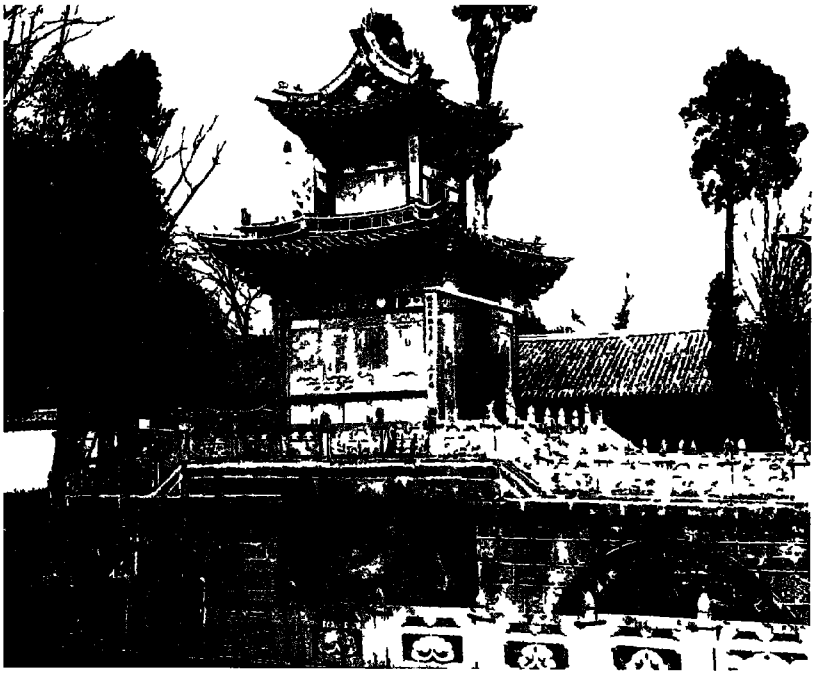
were astonished to find a statue of Confucius. Delicate marble screens protected the finely carved figure, the top half of which appeared, framed like a picture, within a round opening.

To me it was remarkable as the only shrine with a statue to the philosopher that I had ever come across in the whole of my career in China. According to orthodox doctrine there is no idol worship either of Confucius or of effigies. There is worship of ancestors only.

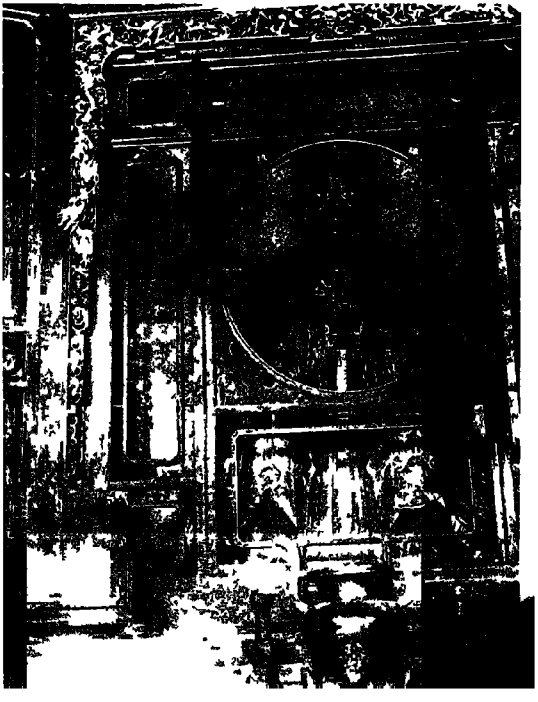
Like so many things in China there are two opinions about this statue. Some think it depicts Confucius, others the General who retook Tali-Fu from the Panthays. Lankester, a better Chinese linguist and scholar than I, after reading inscriptions and talking to the man in charge, was convinced the statue was meant for Confucius. We went into the matter as thoroughly as we could; unfortunately Mr. Hanna was not there.

It is often so difficult in China to get the story of origin. Even inscriptions may be translated in various ways by different Chinese scholars. Simple words like Wei Dien (the name of my hospital in Yunnan-Fu) will be translated by one man as *Bestowing Mercy*, and by another *Mercy has come down upon us;* Kwan Ming itself by one as *Glittering Brightness* and by another as *Bright Light.* Much licence is allowed, and who is to say which is right and which wrong?

There are rare and hardly-to-be-considered genuine pictures of Confucius. Lady Hosie, in the admirable little book she edited, *The Analects of Confucius*, translated by her father, W. E. Soothill, says of these pictures:—'the oldest shows us a man with the broad strong equable face of the countryman of North China today. He wears a handsome high cap with an ornament in it and fringe; his tunic is folded with care, for he liked to be handsome in his dress. Under the fringe his large dark lustrous eyes are humorous, kind and thoughtful, and he wears a pleasing half-smile. His ears are always shown as very large, as large ears are to the Chinese a sign of sagacity. He has the thin elegant beard of the Chinese gentleman. He was taller than the average and must have had good physique . . .' She adds: 'Confucius was a sportsman—he never aimed at a resting bird or fished with a net. He enjoyed music; and he liked his mat to be set straight before he sat on it. "Scholars," he said to his disciples, "remember this: oppressive rule is more cruel than a tiger."'



TEMPLE OF THE
GODDESS OF MERCY



CONFUCIUS STATUE



NATURAL ROCK ARCH
OVER THE
HSIA KWAN RIVER

As we gazed at the marble monument of 'Kung the Philosopher', with his large kind eyes, we remembered his ideal maxim—'the greatest good to the greatest number', and we marvelled at his story.

Born about 550 B.C., in his youth keeper of stores and superintendent of parks and herds to the chief of the district in which he lived, at twenty-two he became a teacher, at fifty-two a Chief Magistrate and subsequently Minister of Crime; but the intrigues of a certain prince were too much for him. He retired, to wander for thirteen years until, at last, he settled down to write his books. He died at the age of seventy-two.

'The only thing divine about him,' it is said, 'was his great humanity.' Down the ages his code of happiness has been taught in the five relationships:—between parent and child; between husband and wife; between ruler and subject; between older and younger brother; between friend and friend. Unlike our Bible, he gave no rules for the achievement of his ideals.

When we reached Hsia Kwan, *the Town of the Lower Pass*, we found it to be very different from Tali-Fu.

Here the south road met the north road—down which we had come from Tali-Fu—crossing the Burma Road. Along the busy thoroughfares, trains of laden animals wound in all directions.

The City of the Roaring Cross Roads would have been a fitting name. It was like emerging from a backwater into the thunder of the weir. Briskness, bustle, hubbub and a multitude of divers types of men and garb gave the place an animation that savoured of metropolitanism.

Opulent-looking merchants stood out from the crowd in which one could distinguish men and women of the Shan type, long-limbed and sinewy, swinging along with untiring stride; squat Burmese, plump and complacent; lusty, intelligent-looking Tibetans; and Mahomedans with clever mobile dark eyes.

Mules pushed their way along, laden with oil, bales, great trusses of tobacco leaf, and native salt in wedges like the intersections of a giant Dutch cheese.

In the town snow from the mountains was being offered for sale. My memory flashed back to a day years ago. As a youngster I spent a few months in the Blue Mountains in Australia. Whilst I was there snow fell, a rare occurrence. Excursion trains were run from Sydney, and enterprising people took back with them tin boxes filled with snow.

The town, on an eminence, was ringed with wild heights, terraced slopes, ridges and tree-fringed rills. Well-cared-for buildings on a substantial scale gave the place an air of well-being.

Among these we found Mackintosh Hat's residence, a splendid specimen of a Chinese home. Built on the same model but on a grander scale than the Mule King's, it had large entrance doors, and many paved courts gay with flowering shrubs and surrounded with suites of rooms. The importance of a Chinese house and the circumstance of its owner are evinced by the number of courtyards.

I thought Marco Polo's description of the great Kublai Khan just fitted this modern Chinese marble merchant:—'of fine middle size, neither too tall nor too short: he has a beautiful fresh complexion, and well-proportioned limbs. His colour is fair and vermeil like the rose, his eyes dark and fine, his nose well formed and placed'. To this add large spectacles and a sophisticated air, and you have a picture of our friend.

He placed a suite at our disposal and asked us to join him in the guest-room to drink tea: "Scented with rose, tuberose, orange or jasmine?" he asked. We chose jasmine.

I was still not quite fit and glad to sit down. I thoroughly enjoyed the fragrant hot tea.

The large room was handsomely furnished. Marble panels were let in to the backs of the chairs between the marble-topped tables. On the wall opposite me, a painted scroll hung between marble pictures. These pictures were in long wooden frames, each containing four squares of marble one under the other, representing in their irregular veining—with a certain vagueness that whetted the imagination—wild mountain scenery, jagged snow crags, misty tree-outlined hills, or perhaps the branch of a conifer. . . .

At the further end of the room a high narrow table held a Chien Lung vase. Seeing my gaze fixed on it, our host delightedly showed me the almost priceless piece. "Not my best," he said. "I have two or three more which I keep wrapped up, and take each out for a few weeks at a time."

He then spoke of his business, and how the veined marble, cut and worked into panels for screens, pedestals and pictures, was sent all over China. According to the picture to be fancied in the veining, experts cut it into circles or perhaps pairs. He wished to present us each with a picture, but we had to beg him

to excuse our acceptance, as we were travelling so light it was impossible to take them with us.

"Some other time," he graciously agreed.

(The 'some other time' came when I was leaving Yunnan-Fu some two years later. My household goods disposed of and my heavy baggage sent ahead, as the last farewells were being waved and the train started to move, Mackintosh Hat hastened up the platform and thrust into my arms a large marble picture! I have the picture always on my table—a lovely thing of misty pine-edged snow mountains, but as a last-minute gift it was not very easy to accommodate in the train or on shipboard.)

We saw less of the women in this Mahomedan household than at the Ma Uk. More sophisticated, they kept in the background, waited on by their well-cared-for (in this household) slave girls. I was only asked to attend to one lady, who, whilst embroidering a shoe, had pricked and poisoned her finger. Otherwise my host gave strict orders that I was not to be worried.

Later that evening, after a meal in our own rooms, the merchant came ostensibly to see if we were comfortable. He brought the conversation round presently to religion.

"Li I Shang," he said, "we Mahomedans, like you, believe in God—not like these people . . ." with a wave of his hand in a wide gesture.

I saw the man had something on his mind. When I asked if there was anything I could do to help him, he begged me to accompany him to his own part of the house.

As we crossed a courtyard towards a camellia bush in full flower, the lurid rays of the setting sun struck it, suddenly transforming the lovely thing before my eyes into the sinister shape of a huddled figure dripping great gouttes of blood, its fallen petals a crimson pool at its feet.

"What an extraordinary hallucination!" I thought to myself, as my host led me through one room to another. "I must be more tired than I realised."

The further room was empty but for a man sitting cross-legged on a mat, muttering to himself and looking furtively round in apparent fear of someone or something.

"How has he got into this condition?" I enquired.

The merchant took me back to the other room. "Be seated," he said, and in a low agitated voice. "I will tell you," he began.

"When I returned home a few days ago, I immediately became

aware from the demeanour of my servants that something was wrong. 'My household?' I asked: All was well. 'My brother?' —he had been to Burma on business connected with rubies. 'He has come,' replied my head man with downcast eyes, and he led me, signing me to tread softly, to my brother's room. I found what you have just seen—my twin brother, who, when I last saw him a few weeks ago, was as hale and full of life as myself.

"But before I tell my brother's story, as you must know, Li I Shang, between here and the hot valleys leading to the Burma plains are many rivers and mountains. What perhaps you do not know is that in these mountains are many hidden and secret caves." He paused.

Then bracing himself to continue: "My brother and his partner, a young man like himself," he went on, "had accomplished their business in Burma and were returning. One evening, some days' march from here, talking, they happened to fall a little, but a very little, behind the caravan when a quick rainstorm struck down from the mountains. They dismounted to take shelter behind a rock, thinking it would soon be over. The caravan continued on its way and soon disappeared round a bend.

"A few seconds later my brother and his friend heard a clatter of stones. From the hillside beside them sprang a gang of rough men, who surrounded, overcame, bound, gagged and hustled them away down a path like the dry bed of a torrent, leading their ponies, good animals, in the rear.

"After they had been hurried for some time in the falling darkness along tortuous paths there was suddenly a scrimmage, a thud and a shout. One of the ponies had lost its footing and rolled off the path.

"The robbers, eager not to loose the beast, broke file and scrambled down after it. In the excitement, my brother managed to roll over and hide himself amongst the boulders and bushes. He heard the men who had gone after the pony call up that they had found it, little the worse, and that they would be able to bring it up. The rest of the party went ahead. When the men with the pony gained the path, they must have thought my brother had gone on with the others, as they made no attempt to look for him.

"By degrees he freed himself from the thongs and gag and

crawled up the hillside to find the path and so try to retrace his way. In the darkness he must have climbed over it. After groping about for a long time he eventually found he had entered the mouth of a narrow cave.

"He thanked God for the shelter, and felt his way in, the cave narrowing till he had to crawl on all fours. He then came to a place where the tunnel starred into several channels. He felt his way round, but completely lost his bearings, decided on one passage and suddenly slipped down a sort of chute twice his own length. He lay there stunned, he supposes, for some time.

"When he came to, he was aware of voices and the glare of a light. He found himself lying face downwards in a hollow ledge, a place evidently scooped out and arranged for the purpose of observation, for, straight in front of his eyes, a window-like slit commanded a view of a large cave below.

"In the light of a fire he saw his comrade surrounded by the robbers. They were trying to extort information from him as to the whereabouts of the rubies they were convinced were being conveyed by the caravan. They would not believe him when he swore the rubies had been sent elsewhere.

"At last the infuriated and exasperated leader gave an order. Red-hot brands were drawn from the fire and applied to the sole of their victim's left foot. The scream he emitted seemed the echo of the sound that had brought my brother to his senses. He now saw his friend's right foot was already charred.

"What could he do? He had no means of either succouring his friend or of escaping himself. He dared not so much as move his head for fear of attracting attention, and lay in this sort of open coffin, compelled to witness his companion's torture.

"They held his hands over the fire. When they found the information they wanted could not be extracted by fire they brought out their knives, and, oblivious to the shrieks of the terrified and tormented man, they slowly cut off the tips of his ears, his fingers joint by joint, his toes, his nose, until he became unconscious and died.

"My brother must have fallen into a swoon. When he awoke the cave was empty but for the dying fire which lit a huddled mass . . .

"Li I Shang, you could never guess to what he compared that ghastly sight!"

But I knew—though I did not speak.

"Suddenly my brother thought what he saw was the camellia bush at his door in the courtyard outside, its crimson flowers lit by the last shooting rays of the setting sun as he had so often seen it! . . . The camellia bush he and I had planted together and tended and loved so well.

"Gazing at the horrible sight, the illusion brought to him thoughts of his home and a determination to try to get there. He did make his escape. How, he can hardly recall. He clambered and crawled across the mountains and had arrived but a few hours before myself.

"I have not yet persuaded him to eat or drink. He seems to think someone is trying to poison him. He has not slept."

"My friend," I replied, "I will do what I can for him. First I must fetch some medicine I fortunately happen to have with me."

"He will not take it," and he shook his head.

I fetched the paraldehyde, and explained what miracles it works, and what his brother needed was this strong sleeping draught which would keep him asleep for twenty-four hours.

I went in and talked seriously and quietly to the poor fellow, and eventually persuaded him to take the medicine.

He soon fell into a deep asleep. I am glad to say, I heard afterwards that he slowly recovered his normal outlook, though still somewhat nervous in his demeanour—which was not to be wondered at after the terrible scene he had witnessed at such close quarters.

"Burn the camellia bush," I said to Mackintosh Hat as I went out. "It has done its duty."

CHAPTER XVIII

# TO HOH CHIANG. *The Meeting of the Rivers*

*Thursday, March 27th*

OUR new muleteer was a very different type of fellow from Ma Hong 'Peng. Younger and rougher, he went by the name of Lao Yong; Lao meaning old, being a friendly mode of address, just as we say 'Old Bill'. To us he immediately became 'Old Young'. Old Young had just started business on his own, and besides our four baggage and two riding mules he was taking with him fourteen pack mules.

Our baggage from Tali-Fu was due early on Thursday, but it did not come. As the hours passed Old Young as well as ourselves grew restive. When it turned up, a little before noon, he gave the local carrier the rough side of his tongue. He quickly transferred the loads, and, once the vexation over and we were off he unwound the blue cloth that he had worn round his waist, tied it over his head against the heat of the sun and trudged briskly along, emitting harsh sounds that might serve as a dirge or were possibly his idea of a love song.

The stage was only sixty li, about ten miles, so we really had plenty of time. The Chinese li is of varied length. In this country, where man and beast carry heavy burdens, the payment is calculated by gradient, not yards. Uphill, the li is shorter than downhill. On the level it is of yet a different length. There is a good deal to be said for the plan. A coolie carrying a load uphill from Y to Z is automatically paid more than a coolie carrying the same weight downhill from Z to Y.

Through a long paved street, up a steep incline, we left Shia Kwan and entered upon the slope which rises from the margin of the lake to the mountain spurs. Following the left bank of the river, which issues from the south end of the lake, we were surprised to find the wide slow stream suddenly plunge under a natural bridge of rock—through which barrier it must once have bored its way—and become a foaming torrent.

Here, where the valley walls close in to their narrowest, just above the torrent the ancient fort, Guardian of the Pass, dominates the glen.

Through the narrow ravine we mounted steeply, then dropped again to river level. The road now coasted along

through pleasant glades of walnut trees beside the stream, tossing and brawling its noisy way west over enormous boulders.

We followed its waters for the rest of the way, until we reached Hoh Chiang, *the Meeting of the Rivers,* where our stream, the Hsia Kwan (sharing the name of the town and the pass), flowed into the Ch'uan-Chiao, *Winding Water,* and the Yang-Pi, *Bright Jade.* The combined streams then flowed hurriedly north, keeping the name of Yang-Pi.

The scenery down the four valleys traversed by these three rivers and their continuation was wild and fine. Hoh Chiang, the small walled village, whose duty was once to protect the western entrance of the pass we had just been threading, occupies a site near the confluence of the waters.

We found Hoh Chiang to be desolated, pillaged and burnt out by bandits. The only accommodation we could find at all was in the upper storey of a schoolroom, roofed but open on all sides. This airy platform proved miserably cold. We slept but fitfully and longed for the night to be over.

CHAPTER XIX

# TO YANG-PI. *Bright Jade*

*Friday, March 28th*

WE waited for the dawn before rising. Once away, we walked at first to get warm; by noon it was blazing. Before noon we halted at a half-way house for tea.

There I saw the saddest collection of patients that I had as yet come across. Three blind beggar women, travelling hand in hand, wailed their "Sir, do a good deed!" Their eyes, like so many others in this land, had been destroyed by acute ophthalmia. A deaf man, a dumb child, and a boy who had been bitten by a mad dog were brought to me. I cauterised the boy's wound, which was all I could do, for the nearest Pasteur Institute was in far Hanoi. I told his people not to kill the dog, for if it lived they would know it was not mad.

The saddest sight of all—even more distressing than the many goitre cases—were the cretins. Dwarf-like in appearance with overgrown hands and feet and thickened bones, they were so dull of understanding that they were almost incapable of looking after themselves beyond the conveying of food to their mouths.

One motherly woman said the prettiest thing to me in return for some little thing I did for her baby. She had two little boys with her. One amused himself by whipping a top in a chalked circle, while the other nibbled at a shining copper-coloured meatball from the shop nearby. The words she used were words I had first seen carved on the bridge at the great irrigation system outside Kwan Shien on the Cheng Tu plain:—'Pray God will always create good men. Pray that men will always do good deeds.'

All this strengthened my resolve to try to find more aid for these people. I hoped that my efforts would meet with more success than those of Maffio and Nicolo Polo. Commissioned by Kublai Khan on their return to Venice to bring back with them to his court 'a hundred men of learning, thoroughly acquainted with the Christian religion as well as with the seven sciences', they only managed to obtain two from Pope Gregory X. Two Dominicans, who set out with the brothers on their

return to China (with Nicolo's son Marco, aged seventeen, also of the party). The two Dominicans were soon daunted and turned back at an early stage of the journey, a journey which took the three Polos, undismayed by perils and difficulties, three and a half years to accomplish.

Again and again as we walked along, a turn of the road and a new view would bring to life the pictures of the marble tablets—a fir-cloaked snow-capped mountain; a flamed-stemmed ancient pine drawing the sunshine to its heart; a waterfall amongst dark red crags; baby spruces, which the country people love to set before their doors at the New Year; or a Buddhist temple perched on a cliff—those monks of old had an amazingly good eye for a beautiful site.

In the afternoon Ah Yang proposed a short cut that he knew of, by a bridle path over the hills. Lankester preferred to walk, so he kept to the main road with Old Young and the baggage. Ah Yang and I took the two riding mules to make the short cut, planning to wait for the others where we struck the main road again.

The path was abominable: the ride anything but amusing: the cut anything but short. When we eventually struck the main road, we waited and waited for Lankester and Old Young. At last we rode back along the main road, but could get no news of them. After three tiresome hours we realised that they must be ahead.

We rode into Yang-Pi town—on the river of the same name upon which it lay, which had flowed north green and turbulent alongside the road all the way from Hoh Chiang—getting there, instead of at two-thirty as we had planned, at five-thirty, to find, to my great relief, Ronald Lankester already arrived, baggage and beds unpacked and food ready in fairly good quarters.

Yang-Pi was once a fortress of great importance to Tali-Fu. It guarded the high mountain passes which, though nominally closed for six months in the year on account of the snow, were frequently used by smugglers. As long as the Upper Pass, at the north end of the lake, and the south or Lower Pass, by which we had come, were held, Tali was unapproachable from the west except by these snowy passes, which the Yang-Pi fortress was deemed to command. It was by these passes that the Mahomedan insurgents succeeded in capturing Tali-Fu.

CHAPTER XX

# TO TAI PING PU. *Peace Market*

*Saturday, March 29th*

SINCE we had left Tali-Fu, we had moved along three sides of a square to get round the barrier of the Ts'ang Shan Mountains, first south to the pass, then west to the meeting of the rivers, then north to Yang-Pi. From now we would head steadily west to Bhamo.

Yang-Pi was 5,500 feet above sea-level, and from there we had as stiff climbing as any we had experienced up to that time. By eight o'clock we were up to 7,000 feet, by nine o'clock 8,000 feet, and we soon reached 8,200. This was the same height we had attained on the march beyond Iu Woo Gwan, where we met the pilgrim women.

The view we had then, looking down on the plain of Yunnan Hsien, was very different from what we now saw. Now we were in the heart of the Mountain Kingdom. All the day before we had had the Tali-Fu mountains to the right—on the east—of us, their thickly-clad slopes foamed with wide stretches of snow; whilst the day before we had been following an immense corridor with sheer mountains on either side. Now we were on the heights themselves with summits and slopes clustering round us, rising in ragged rhythm away to the far beyond. Shaded in a pearly haze we could just make out the way we had come, the cleft valley of two days ago and the rushing Yang-Pi by which we had marched the day before.

After the stiff climb we halted for a snack—we had been going for four hours. Of course, we hadn't our mackintoshes when some showers came our way, but we escaped a real downpour. We carried on for some way at 8,000 feet, and at this height revelled in the sight of rich profusions of both white and red rhododendrons, singularly lovely camellias, peach blossoming superlatively, and wild pear trees in plenty but their flowering over.

We struck a gradual descent, then dropped to 6,800. The agility and steadiness of the mules were, as ever, something to marvel at. After that it was fairly easy downward walking. I still felt rather shaky, though greatly recovered, and rode a good bit of the way, and finished not nearly so tired as I had been on the previous day.

Our halting place, a valley hamlet, was named Ping Pu, which signifies *Peace*. Certainly it was quiet in the way that it was cut off from everywhere, but there was another sort of quiet, an eerie and absolutely uncanny silence in the place that seemed hard to account for.

All the accommodation we could find was in a cramped hovel, an empty shop open to the road, filthy and verminous. Ah Yang came to say no food was to be bought, not even the nearly always procurable dried and spiced geese and ducks (that the Mahomedans like so much in place of the forbidden ham), or even an ordinary egg (sponge) cake. The muleteers were unable to buy beans for their mules and had to feed them on their reserve rations.

What was wrong? After a scratch meal of our tinned provisions, Lankester and I went out to investigate. There was undoubtedly some hidden cause for unrest in the place, the demeanour of the people was so peculiar. We could get no information until, upon the wall of the temple, we found a notice written by the priests, which ran to the effect of:—

THE PEOPLE MUST COME TO THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP.
THE GOD OF MURDER IS WRATHFUL!
HE HAS KILLED THREE PEOPLE!
FURTHERMORE—THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED TO SAVE THEM AND BRING THEM AWAY HAVE BEEN KILLED BY A THUNDERBOLT!
THE PEOPLE MUST COME TO THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP.

So that was the reason of the strange look that we had seen on the faces of these country folk skulking in their doorways as we passed down the street. Now we knew what it meant—FEAR! Those words from the *Song of Solomon* came alive to me in a way I had never expected to witness:—

'. . . for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them.

'So then whosoever there fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison without iron bars.

'For whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a labourer in the field, he was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which could not be avoided: for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.

'Whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of water running violently,

'Or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains: these things made them swoon for fear.'

Old Young met us on our return to the hovel with the remark that although he knew we had planned to take a rest on the morrow, being Sunday, this was no place for us. He and the other men evidently knew more than they would say; whatever it was, they kept their information to themselves.

It was too late to go on now with darkness falling, but they urged us to leave as early in the morning as possible, with the cryptic but sufficient remark that this was a place of trouble.

Tai Ping Pu, we agreed with Old Young, was no place for us for an hour longer than was absolutely necessary: a place that, in spite of its name, had neither peace nor plenty!

CHAPTER XXI

# TO PEH TAO PU. *White Bean Village*

*Sunday, March 30th*

FROM our start, early and quick, we climbed nearly a thousand feet, and then skirted a ridge for miles. The prospect was magnificent; but the day became scorchingly hot as the sun mounted and shade on the road was scarce, though all around us the hills were thickly wooded with pines, oaks and chestnuts.

Towards midday we dropped down more than 2,000 feet, and after our rest climbed up again. Here and there we saw farms, picturesque in the distance, but disappointing with the usual dirt and decay at close quarters. As we climbed we again came across lovely red and white rhododendrons in full flower. On one bush I found seeds I was able to gather and take home with me.

We finished at a delightful spot, Peh Tao Pu, *White Bean Village*, near a mountain-top, with good accommodation in an excellent inn, like a large farmhouse, with a spacious courtyard. It marked the half-way house of our journey.

Here we spent a pleasant Sunday evening, and although we had made a long day's journey and didn't get in until 4.30 p.m., we thoroughly enjoyed the few hours' leisure and rest. We wished we had been able to make this place the evening before, and would have been glad to have been able to spend a longer time here—a very different place from the fear-haunted Ping Pu.

The inn was charmingly situated, placed to command a noble view. As I sat enjoying it, I thought of my people at home with their much-loved ancient church, and could but contrast the life of the village there with what we had seen the day before of the tyranny of the devil-worshipping pagan priests, demanding with grim threats service to the God of Murder. It was sad to think that in all this vast territory north and south of where we were travelling, nothing had ever been heard by the peoples who dwell in them of a Loving God.

CHAPTER XXII

## TO CHU TUNG. *Place of the Crooked Cave.*

*Monday, March 31st*

OUR stay at the mountain inn was an enjoyable one. We had a sound and undisturbed sleep, and were up and out in time for a glorious sunrise.

First the shadowy mountains slowly painted themselves against the blue half-light of the still sky; then a light rosy glow became stronger and stronger and gave to the miles upon miles of the mountains a more definite outline, whilst their lower contours remained in a soft uncertain haze. Of a sudden came a golden blaze behind the Tali-Fu Mountains. Seventy miles away and jet black, they stood sharply outlined against the aurora of flame, the golden light searching out and flooding the clefts, whilst in the far sky the rosy tints turned to amber. Then with majestic momentum the great golden orb of the sun rose, sailing up as if with a shout, throwing the heights and the wide countryside into a bright laughing world, and giving to us men a welcome heartening warmth after the chill of the night.

It was grand walking that morning! We went up over a brow of 8,000 feet, with another great snow-capped mountain ahead to the west. As we wound away down, the Tali-Fu Mountains to the east reappeared once more, the sun now high enough to show them in their hoary whiteness.

Before we lost sight of them for good, we caught one of those fleeting pictures so dear to the memory—a single silver-white pheasant beside a white blossoming rhododendron with the white mountains behind.

Our mules were taking the journey well, though our loads were not light, and our riding mules were having the time of their lives, for we so thoroughly enjoyed the walking.

One descent brought us into the Yung Ping, *Everlasting Peace*, Plain. The plain only measured some four miles by two, and the main road did not pass through the town.

We crossed and recrossed a small river in the valleys, with apparently a passion for changing its mind and its course. It was spanned here and there with enchanting old bridges. Three of them we crossed were named Hsiao Hua Ch'iao, *Little Flower Bridge*, To Hua Ch'iao, *Big Flower Bridge*, and a three-arched

bridge, Fen Ming Shih Ch'iao, *Stone Bridge of the Cry of the Phœnix* (or pheasant).

Old stone bridges such as these are, of course, one of the great features of China, and are often a thousand and more years old, beautifully proportioned and scientifically built and seemingly prepared to stand for ever whether in use or no. In this place some of them were completely out of commission, unused and idly spanning the river, for, when calamitous storms washed away or landslides blocked the roads leading to them, the work of road repair shelved to an indefinite future, the new road merely made for a fordable shallow or for a place where a ferry could ply.

The bridges we crossed were probably built in the long ago by some notable to 'acquire merit'. So massively built they would be capable of carrying a heavy tractor, the buttressed arches splendidly strong and the balustrades of oblong stone slabs pleasing and handsome.

After passing some hilly ups and downs, we came to a fertile plain in which stood the town of Chu Tung. By good fortune we found quarters in an inn with an airy comfortable loft. The snow mountain we had seen from the heights in the morning now lay in the north-west, and not in our path as we had thought, though it was evident that we had yet another high ridge to negotiate.

We asked our landlord what the name of this place, Chu Tung, signified—for so often the same word may have different meanings according to the intonation of its pronunciation. He turned to a friend standing by, and

'With a wink of his eye, his friend made reply
In his jocular manner, sly, caustic and dry.'

"Chu Tung, Chu Tung," and he seemed to turn the words over in his mouth as if to discover their flavour, "means . . . er . . . the *Place of the Crooked and Winding Cave!* my lord. . . . Would . . . er . . . your lordship care to visit it?" he enquired pressingly.

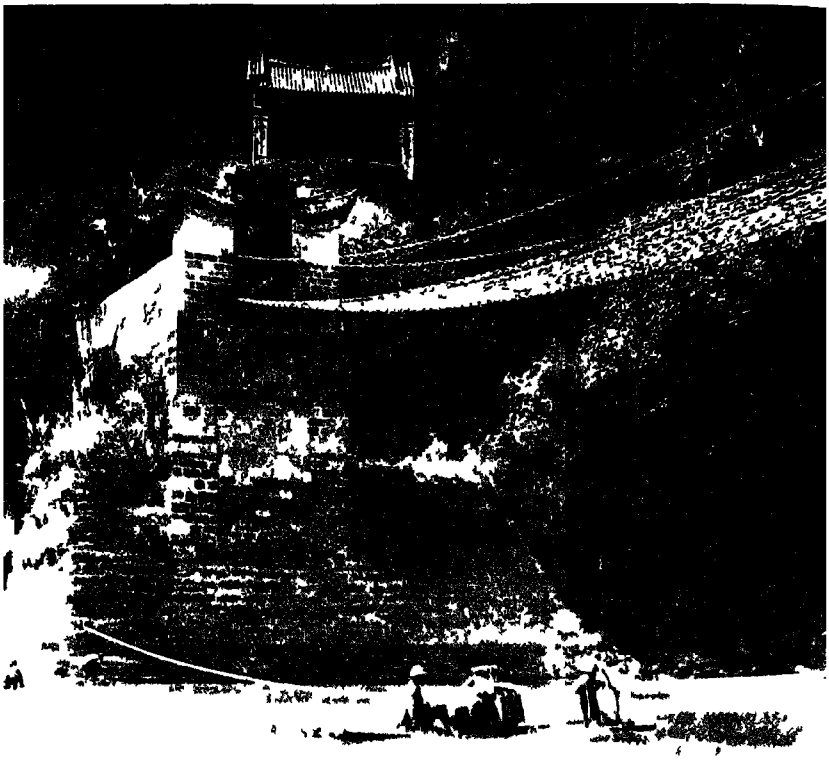
"No, thank you," I replied most emphatically, "I would NOT!"



STONE BRIDGE OF THE CRY OF THE PHOENIX



LOADING RAFTS EAST BANK MEKONG RIVER



DR BRADLEY CROSSING
THE MEKONG RIVER
ON A BAMBOO RAFT

See page 9

CHAPTER XXIII

## TO SHAI YANG. *Sandy Gorge*

*Tuesday, April 1st*

THE Chinese calendar and the English calendar differ.

We of course lived by the English calendar, and woke up to what in the West is jocularly known as "All Fools' Day"—but deluded ourselves that the festival was unknown to our present employees.

Of all wonders, the muleteers and Ah Yang were well on time! Everything was stowed and loaded by 6 a.m. All apparently ready for the road, the muleteers then informed us that their breakfast was not yet even prepared! For an hour we had to kick our heels whilst these necessary and not unimportant people regaled themselves.

We started as usual on foot. Chu Tung lay at 5,600 feet above sea-level; in an hour's time we had gained 1,000 feet, and, looking back at *the Place of the Crooked and Winding Cave*, in spite of the sinister story of the camellia bush that the name inevitably brought to my mind, it appeared a favoured spot, a sheltered and luxuriant basin.

We went on, thinking we were to ascend higher still, but the vista ahead proved deceptive, for the road immediately dived down 500 feet. Then up we went again, higher still to 7,000. By that time we had earned lunch and a rest. But after it that road still went up until it reached the highest point we had yet made at all, 8,250 feet.

The day was delightfully cool, and up here we enjoyed the quite bracing atmosphere. The altitude did not seem to affect us in any way; probably, having lived so long at an altitude of 6,500 feet in Yunnan-Fu, we were sufficiently acclimatised for the rarefied air to have little effect on us.

The country around us was one vast mass of huge humpy mountains and little humpy mountains, and I don't know why, but suddenly there came into my head one of David's verses:—'The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like little lambs'; which in the earthquake shocks that rock Asia is exactly what would happen here.

Our road, which had been behaving like a fitful fever chart,

from the extreme height fell suddenly into a steep precipitous descent, and then steadied down and ran for 3,000 feet in one tremendous unvaried decline. Very trying to the knees!—actually far more trying to the knees than a steady unvaried climb up. The road was treacherous in places and the mules must have been glad when it was all over.

All this climbing was an ordeal. The steep ascents on the recent laps took it out of me after the first three hours. It seemed to me that my weight and age were telling: but Lankester agreed that these were abnormal pulls and that we were doing fairly well.

On our way down we had beautiful views of the green floor of the valley below, set in its mountain walls. No place could have looked more inviting. But when we reached the village of Shai Yang, *Sandy Gorge*, at that day's journey's end, we found that the inn was a miserable place. Only a small evil-smelling room was available on the ground floor, filthy not only in itself but in its surroundings, to which a plague of tormenting flies bore witness.

We had expected to have made the crossing of the Mekong River by this date: but Lankester was certain that we were doing well enough. We had finished half of our twelve-day stage between Hsia Kwan and Teng Yueh, which we considered satisfactory. This mountain country is so deceptive on the map, and it is a bold man that will predict progress on it without foreknowledge, and even with that it isn't any too certain, I have heard.

CHAPTER XXIV

## TO SHUI CHAI. *Water Cataract*

*Wednesday, April 2nd*

THIS was a day of surprises.

We got away early, but not early enough. We had hardly set out before we were held up by slow-moving columns of pack animals, all bound for the Mekong River Bridge. We wondered what was the cause of the delay.

The road mounted more steeply than we had reckoned; nor had we expected the sight that met our eyes when we reached the summit.

Before us yawned a monster V-shaped cleft, formed by sheer walls of rock. 1,000 feet down on one side and 2,500 feet up on the other and down, down, down, below us, in the depths of the great ravine, gleamed the dark, swirling waters of the forceful Mekong, crossed by a single-span bridge.

The road shot down in a steep zigzag, and, rather like pebbles in a chute, jerking and jostling, men and mules worked their way down, loop after loop.

"Some special excitement is up," Lankester called to me above the hullabaloo of gesticulating and shouting muleteers.

"The bridge is stripped, the bridge no can pass!" were the words we caught (but in somewhat stronger form), passed up from man to man.

Yes! The great suspension bridge, we could now see, was a bare web of chains; and the steady trickle of the caravans pouring down the ravine were percolating into an ever-swelling mass between the bridge-house and the river bank.

By the time we reached the bottom, the Chinese-Burmese-Tibetan-Shan Billingsgate needed no translation. The bridge, under repair and unusable, meant that every man-jack, every pack, of which there were hundreds, and every mule—that couldn't or wouldn't swim—had to be ferried across that avid black river, on rafts that appeared to be about as solid as a palm-leaf fan! And only a very limited number of rafts was available. The Mekong flows too rapidly in these parts to be navigable, and boats were non-existent.

The muleteers, whose life-rôle is one of Fabian policy, now, to a man—at the idea of being held up for an hour or two—became, in his own imagination, at least the driver of the Flying

Scotsman—or whatever is its particular counterpart for a driver on the Burma Road.

The din was terrific. The more officious clamoured hectoringly for right of way. The smaller fry elbowed or argued or yelled encouragement and exhortations to the wretched ferryman, spinning in mid-stream on his flimsy bamboo raft, whilst he hung on for dear life and guidance to a native-made straw rope slung from bank to bank under the bridge. Agitated passengers howled as the featherweight craft swayed and slipped; frightened mules squealed and kicked each other; above all rose the boom and roar of the river, and the whole racket echoed up, and was amplified by the sheer walls of the ravine.

Under the lee of the rock on which the east bridge-house was projected, we watched the rafts being loaded, slowly and gingerly; then poled and pulled along the bank until within reach of the guide rope. Once he had hold of the rope, the ferryman maintained his position acrobatically and perilously, and, when the strong current struck the light craft and swirled it about, clung on like grim death, whilst he worked his way, hand over hand, along the slippery sagging rope. Once the rope broke and, to the accompaniment of the anguished moans of the onlookers, the raft and its load swirled away down the current—to be rescued, we were glad to hear later, two miles farther down with everything safe.

As our train of baggage was still at the rear, Lankester and I went to look at the bridge. It is said that there has been a bridge here for two thousand years; and that the bridge that stood here then was a thousand years old.

These statements I have no means of verifying. But what we did see—evidently an unusual sight—was that the bridge, from which the horizontal planks that formed the roadway had been removed, consisted of sixteen great chains, and the links of these chains—huge, hand-wrought iron links, of the thickness of a man's arm—were undergoing examination for renewal where worn.

From the two gate-houses up the cliff, the bridge flung high across the river at its narrowest point, pancaked in by the rock walls to some hundred yards' width. An imposing affair viewed from its own level, the bridge appeared delicate and graceful from a distance, in its setting of towering cliffs.

The delay was long and the sun hot, but we found plenty of

entertainment in the animated scene. I remember whiling away the time by telling Lankester the story of a crossing I had made of the Mekong River, some years before, with my wife and youngest boy, where, down south in Indo-China, the river was a mile wide.

The Mekong River, amongst the longest rivers of the world. rises in Tibet, flows through Yunnan, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and French Cochin China and empties by delta into the China Sea. It is so fast-flowing that it is unnavigable in Yunnan. Its total length is estimated at from 1,500 to 2,000 miles.

We watched two ponies, exceptionally well-behaved and intelligent animals, taken across on the rafts, and marvelled at the way they balanced themselves on the dipping flimsy framework of bamboos, standing steadily and quietly for the whole passage.

At last came the turn of our caravan. Each mule had to be unloaded and the packs carried down the steep incline to the rafts.

Next arose the question as to what to do with our twenty mules. After a great deal of palaver, it was decided that there was nothing for it but to drive them in and make them swim across.

At the first attempt they were sent in some way down from the bridge. The current got hold of them and carried them a long way, but they did well; then, when they were within a few yards of the farther bank, one idiot took it into his head to turn back! All but four followed his lead and swam right back across the river again and came to land. It was a big swim, even the one way, and it was maddening that the poor foolish creatures should wear themselves out with the double effort.

Before the second attempt Lao Yong, 'Old Young', went across on the raft himself and rattled a pan of beans as loudly and invitingly as he could to an accompaniment of yelled exhortations to the swimming mules. This answered fairly successfully, and he had enticed them nearly all to land when one of the last two suddenly altered his mulish mind and turned and swam out again for mid-stream; and the one remaining one, wavering a moment, eventually decided to go back with him.

The two returned swimmers were retrieved and brought up to the rafts, on to which they stepped as cleverly and assuredly as if they were gentlemanly thoroughbreds entering their Rolls-Royce horse-boxes; and, standing like bronze statues, made the crossing in perfect style.

Who can fathom the workings of a mule's mind? I certainly

don't profess to be able to, but I am perfectly certain that these had intended from the very beginning to have their joy-ride, even if they had to swim the Mekong four times for it. Well, at least they had worked for their passage.

Then came our own turn, and I must confess that I looked upon the voyage from a very different point of view, and admit that I had misgivings. Two packs and myself were all that a raft would hold, so Lankester and I went over separately. It certainly was a bit of an ordeal.

The frail floating tray swayed; the deep water, so close to me, gurgled and swirled by, and, as the raft was pulled with difficulty into mid-stream, it seemed like a leaf on the dark rushing surface. I felt ridiculously helpless, squatting tailor-wise, and wished I had something in my hand—even the pole the ferryman made use of only under the lee of the bridge-house. The current dragged fiercely against the efforts of the ferryman, hauling on the seemingly inadequate straw rope that hung in a wide loop. Added to all was the awesome experience of looking up at the omnipotent cliffs towering above.

Eventually all were safely across. It took us five hours altogether and we were thankful when it was over. We were afraid the delay might prevent us from reaching our night's destination.

We had seen from the opposite side that we were in for a stiff climb, but with all our apprehensions we were not prepared for the reality. The ascent rose, with loose stones and poor foothold, straight up from the river for nearly 2,500 feet, with never a zigzag or bend, but almost vertical the whole way. We reckoned the gradient to be about one in six.

Ordinarily I should have hung on to a mule's tail to help me up the steep, but I was sorry for the heavily-laden animals already tired from their struggle in the water. I shall never forget the effort! We plugged up and up, wondering if the pull would ever finish.

When we reached the summit the rest of the way seemed of little character. A slight decline, then an easy ascent brought us to a mountainside village, Shui Chai, *Water Cataract*, perched in a small amphitheatre amongst grassy hills, where we were thankful for the accommodation—only passable though it was—that was offered us for the night.

CHAPTER XXV

# TO YUAN CHANG. *Everlasting Lustre*

*Thursday, April 3rd*

FROM the mountain inn we started with a long but gentle ascent for quite a thousand feet, but although we were surrounded by mountains, the going seemed tame after the excitements of the day before. The swim and the climb had told on the mules, and we had to give them an hour's rest when we reached the top.

From here, ahead and some thousand feet below us, we could see the plain of Yuan Chang, *Everlasting Lustre*, and kept it in view all the way down. Spreading for twenty miles north and south and some seven miles wide and teeming with villages, it reminded me of the Yunnan Hsien, the plain outside the city of my hospital.

Yuan Chang city was also visible a long way off. It is built on a spur of the mountains and backed by what looked like a pyramid, but proved, on a closer view, to be an angle of the spur up which the city wall ran. With pagodas and temples clustering up the hillside, the place took on an imposing and prosperous air.

When we reached the plain, we found it to be one vast white marble floor—of opium poppies. A causeway led us to a village, prettily situated on the central stream, which we crossed by a stone bridge. The last seven miles on the flat seemed interminable. It was poppies, poppies all the way; and that in spite of the heavy tax that we had been told was to be levied on opium that year, five dollars to the acre, and the acre a smaller one than ours.

We got in by 4 p.m., and congratulated ourselves on finding a good horse-inn with an upstairs loft and more hope of privacy than our rooms of late on the street level afforded us, but with the usual dirt, dust and flies. I think I found 'flies' spelt with 'ea' preferable to ordinary flies. Fleas are not so apt to spread themselves over everything. On the whole the weather had been all that could be desired, and we had been wonderfully free from both flies and fleas.

Ah Yang returned from market in fine fettle.

"Plenty good stuff! Plenty good buy!" he said with satisfaction as the basket was set before me loaded with carrots, cauli-

flower, radishes, lettuce, oranges, plums, a brace of pheasants, and, on the pinnacle of the pile, a ruddy sheldrake! The birds' gaudy plumage, with the gaily-coloured fruit and vegetables, making, as they were grouped together, a rich and unique picture in still life.

"Duck belong me," said Ah Yang, whisking it aside. "I Shang no likee."

"How you come get?" I asked.

"Wild duck he come opium field. Feed. Feel sleepy. Man knock him down stick! Me no smokee opium—but duck he liking!" he chuckled.

The market gardens here, Ah Yang declared, must be as good as those at Yunnan-Fu, where I have counted up to seventy varieties of vegetables on one market stall, beginning with carrots as large as the fisherman's lost record fish, down to the pea, boiled and eaten in its shell by the thrifty Chinese.

We had not been as successful with our mule bargaining as Ah Yang had been with his marketing. Yuan Chang was as far as our contract with Old Young ran, and we seemed quite unable to find fresh mules to take us on the next day. Our only plan seemed to be to wait and see what turned up in the morning.

We were just going to start our excellent evening meal when Ah Yang popped in, all excitement, to say two other 'foreigners' had come to the inn. We jumped up, and there in the courtyard were two blond-bearded white giants.

"Russians!" I said to Lankester over my shoulder, as I went out to meet them. Russians they were.

We invited them to share our supper, which they delightedly did, and we talked far into the evening together. Tough-looking ruffians, they spoke a little broken English and were amused and intrigued that I knew enough Russian to make conversation possible, the story of the acquisition of which I promised if they would tell us what brought them here.

White Russians, they had reached Indo-China, joined up with the Foreign Legion, but, like so many others, had found it more than even they could stand, and had managed to clear out.

"Where going?" I asked.

"Anywhere—in China," they replied, making it clear that anywhere implied that they must keep away from French territory.

I then told them of how, in the last war, during a visit to Canada, I received a wire from Sir Frederick Treves—in answer

to one offering my services—telling me to report in Moscow immediately. They made me tell of my journey there via Vladivostok; and of my Red Cross and Relief work in Russia, and to which places I went. One of the places I mentioned being known to them, recalled from the back of my mind a midnight adventure when a well-to-do Cossack farmer sent his troika tarantass and driver for me, begging me to return in it as quickly as possible. Wrapped in my sheepskin shuba and slipping on my valenki (felt top-boots), I set out prepared for a long cold drive. Everything went well on the journey out, which took three hours, and I was able to bring some material comfort to the patient who was suffering from a very high fever. Having feasted me with everything of the best—cream, butter, cold beef, black bread and cheese and, of course, tea from the ubiquitous samovar, and a lump of rock or barley-sugar brought out from the bottom of a big trunk as a great luxury (my host very upset because, not taking sugar in my tea, I refused it, he thinking that I was refusing it knowing how precious it was)—I set out again, well past midnight, for the return journey. Fortunately a good moon and snow on the ground made it seem quite light. The road stretched across great undulating plains, occasionally passing through small pine forests. All was very still, and the steady jig-jog of the ponies and the quietness must have lulled the driver to sleep, for suddenly he fell forward between the ponies' heels to the ground. The startled ponies broke into a gallop. What was I to do? I could not reach the trailing reins. I could not leave the man in the road. I rolled out, dropping about three feet on to the soft powdery snow, my shuba saving me from too bad a bump. I found the man unconscious, and, as I couldn't leave him, I had to carry him for the best part of three miles, when he came to and walked the rest of the way with assistance.

How did I get out of Russia?

When the Revolution started I was at Buzuluk, a little east of Samara. As the bi-weekly wagon-lit and even ordinary trains had ceased to run, I was fortunate in being able to get hold of a large fourth-class compartment that had been used as a transport to hold sixty soldiers. Cleaned out, it made a large saloon for my Red Cross nurses and staff. Attached to goods trains we made the journey from station to station, depending on the good will and pleasure of each engine-driver and where his home

lay along the line, until, after thirty days, we reached Vladivostok.

That night, when I opened my diary, I found I had jotted down before I left Yunnan-Fu, against the date on which I expected to be at Yuan Chang: 'Marco Polo's Vochang—couvade—gold teeth—battle—road to Burma'.

Vochang, in Marco Polo's day, may have been the leading district in which the fashion prevailed of lavishly plating the teeth with gold. Now the fashion is widespread, and well-to-do Chinese particularly patronise the mode; but not in this part of the country. It is a fashion particularly admired by the brigands, and nothing tickles their fancy so much as to stop a traveller with a friendly, not 'Your money or your life', but merely 'Your teeth—thank you!'

CHAPTER XXVI

# AT YUAN CHANG

*Friday, April 4th*

THE Russians had left by the time we were ready for breakfast—breakfast by daylight a pleasant change.

Our first business was to bargain for mules, and a wordy business it was. At Yunnan-Fu I was well known; at Hsia Kwan the marble merchant's influence had secured Old Young for us, who had done well; but here, the six men that came forward thought they had us at their mercy.

They swaggered and gesticulated. Why were we here, anyway? We weren't of the Government; we weren't traders. If we were mad enough to be travelling to see the place—(To see the place! What was there to see?)—then we must be mad enough to pay what they saw fit to ask! At long last, after a desperate engagement lasting the best part of an hour, the battle was brought to an end by the timely intervention of Old Young (who was evidently pleased with the present we had given him). A bargain was struck with a tattooed middle-aged Mahomedan, who wore, pirate-fashion, round his head a blue rag with black marks on it that were possibly dirt, but looked to me suspiciously like the skull and cross-bones.

At last someone cracked a joke and all was fairly amicably settled, and the domineering and ranting died down. Riding mules and baggage ponies were to be provided for the morrow; it was absolutely impossible to have them today—so with that we had to retire with as good a grace as we could muster.

The one topic in Yuan Chang was the opium crop and its price.

The crop here was earlier than we had seen elsewhere, and was already being harvested. We went to have a look at the workers. The white flowers are considered to give the best opium, and are therefore most widely cultivated. When the petals fall, the bulbous-headed stalks are left for a couple of weeks to swell. Opium is the juice which exudes from incisions made on the outside of the capsules when they are fully developed. Eight perpendicular incisions are made by a knife with three or four parallel blades, which lances, without penetrating, the wall of the capsule. These incisions are made in the evening,

and the exuding sap, of a creamy appearance, is garnered in the morning—by man, woman or child—by scraping it off with a piece of flat bamboo into a wooden bowl. The scraping continues every morning for three or four days, the sap growing darker each day. Fine weather is essential to a good harvest, for even a shower of rain will wash away the draining sap. The raw opium is then exposed to the sun for the evaporation of surplus moisture. Then follows a complicated boiling process, before the final formation into large balls.

Later, a second-grade opium is produced by pressing the cut poppy heads.

When the manufacturing was finished, this particular crop, we learnt, would all go to Yunnan-Fu, where agents would make their purchases. Thence it would be taken by train, and later by coolie transport, to a Chinese provincial border station; a heavy guard always escorting the convoy, which at a rough estimate was valued at £30,000. It would then be put on a steamer, and at once became doubled in value.

This is not the place to discuss the pros and cons of the opium trade. The Government, at the time of which I speak, had laws for abolishing its production, and recognised the industry by taxing the crop. The farmers grew it, despite the tax, as it was more profitable than cereals. Much land, that should have been used to produce food, was given over to the poppy, and thus contributed to distress in lean years. Opium-growing was a national industry, with millions of dollars involved, and yet it was officially stated that opium was not grown in China.

Setting aside entirely the question of the enormous sums involved, which are regarded as necessary to revenue, the tragic part about the whole problem is that in many parts of China opium is so easily grown, so easily obtained, and so cheap, that even the poorest can indulge. I have heard people say, who do not understand—"Look at the coolie. Completely exhausted, he takes a few whiffs of opium and is able to work again. It must do him good!"

That is not so. The wretched, underfed coolie, to gain a pittance, falls back on the drug, which enables his limbs to perform their duties in a mechanical manner to the day's end. Next day he is good for nothing. Labour is cheap, and his place easily filled.

Opium was the evil that was undermining the progress and

initiative of the whole nation. Opium-smoking is a vice that should be stamped out. The difficulties are not insurmountable. There were, at one time, those who said the Slave Trade could never be stamped out. In spite of the enormous amount of money involved, there were strong men who made it their life's work to see that it came to an end, and they succeeded.

The disturbed state of China ten or so years ago and the need for raising money by the various War Lords led, no doubt, to a great extension in the cultivation and trading. It must be different now, I imagine, with the arrival of expert agriculturists in the west, who will be able to give skilled advice about the growing of other crops of good value: and, as time goes on, it is hoped that other crops will be substituted.

We went to call on the Inland Mission headquarters. We had not expected to find a 'foreigner', and were surprised to be welcomed by an American lady, Mrs. Payne. Her husband was away, but, expressing her regrets at his absence, Mrs. Payne insisted on our staying to luncheon—and a marvellous luncheon she gave us.

She told us that she had met her husband at the Moody Institute in Chicago (which I had at one time visited), and that they had now been married two years, and were working together in this isolated place. Lankester and I had remarked on our way down to the plain, with its wide view of many well-built villages, that this seemed to be the very place for an enterprising missionary doctor with nurse and school.

Mrs. Payne told us the work was very uphill, for the Mahomedans, here in great force, refused to be converted to Christianity, and argued that they and we missionaries already belonged to the same religion and believed in the same God. The medical work, however, was tremendous, and they needed a larger staff.

"It is in districts like this," she said, "that it would be such a good thing if every missionary, man or woman, that contemplated coming out, could take a course of general medicine at, say, Livingstone College, London. It would also be of tremendous value if the women could take a course at the Queen Charlotte or some other maternity hospital, and, if possible, get their C.M.B. certificate."

I knew only too well that until recently, in the country and indeed in the Chinese cities also, the simplest things with regard to child-birth were unknown, and that many a life was sacrificed,

when by means of a little simple manipulation mother and child would both do well.

I asked Mrs. Payne if she had ever come across the custom the French call *couvade*, of which Marco Polo, when telling of Vochang (Yuan Chang), said: 'These people have the singular usage'.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Payne, "you mean after the wife has had a baby she gets up—as of course these sturdy women always do at once to do all the work—and the husband spends forty days cuddling the baby and receiving all the visitors! Well, all I know is that the *woman has to go to work* and very probably the man takes the opportunity of lying in bed and (probably smoking opium) pretending to look after the baby. Certain Chinese are always ready to lie down and rest themselves—'it's only proper that a man should!' they say. Here the women work just as hard as the men, if not harder. That I do know."

There was much scope for educational work, too. Though many of China's sons have visited Europe and America to prepare themselves for China's advancement, the people in out-of-the-way places such as this were still living the life of our Middle Ages.

Middle Ages!—no, I am wrong. A hundred and less years ago life in the cities of Blake's 'dark satanic mills' was far worse than the lot of many of the Chinese peasantry, however neglected. The Chinese might think their ills were due to evil spirits, but in England a hundred years ago, as Arthur Bryant puts it—'a child, a cripple, a pregnant woman, an epileptic or a neurasthenic was not free but was the slave of circumstances over which he or she had no control'.

Mrs. Payne kindly insisted that we should return to have supper with her. We did, and had a grand evening. Not only did that kind lady again feed us royally—we must have emptied her larder—but on the doorstep we met the postman.

Clean and tidy in his blue cotton frogged suit, he bowed as he handed me an important-looking letter, his face wrinkled in smiles under an enormous grass-fibre hat. The hat, at least three feet wide with an intricate pattern woven in the straw, was balanced on top of his neat little cap. Having delivered the goods he patted down the flap of his white canvas post-bag, gleamed at us again out of his little half-moon eyes, and padded off in his grass sandals. He seemed as pleased at having delivered

the letter as we were to receive it—or possibly he was just feeling so happy under his new straw hat.

The letter was from Mr. Wyatt Smith, the new British Consul at Teng Yueh, three days' march ahead. He had heard of our coming and had sent to ask us to be his first guests. He said that he would come to meet us if we would let him know the date of our arrival. This was delightful, but, best news of all, he had letters awaiting us. (I had told Cooks to forward my mail from Rangoon there.) How we looked forward to letters from England in three days' time!

We hurried off at once to wire our acceptance, laconically to be told that the line was out of order. When was it ever in order, we wondered, considering the haphazard fashion the wires that had accompanied us along the road were festooned between drunken posts or looped up through the branches to any convenient tree? We wrote, hoping the post would travel quicker than we did, and gave injunctions to send the wire if the line were mended before three days.

Though at the time we had been vexed at losing a day owing to the transport negotiations, we had much enjoyed the break. I had gathered a good deal of information; we had enjoyed meeting enterprising and brave Mrs. Payne and hearing of the work here; and we had received Mr. Wyatt Smith's letter, which we should otherwise have missed.

CHAPTER XXVII

# TO PU PIAO. *Precious Market*

*Saturday, April 5th*

"PAUL JONES," as we called our new mule contractor, turned up on time in the morning, and our baggage was loaded on a team of small ponies, amongst them the usual little skewbald; but I didn't quite like the vixenish look that the mule that I was provided with gave me from the corner of her unwelcoming eye.

When I approached to mount her, having formed as quick an antipathy to me at first sight as I had to her, she started to waltz, monopolising all the small space available, whilst I found myself in the unpleasant position of a willy-nilly wallflower. Pinned in as I was, I was not sure which end of her I disliked most—her ugly jaws, ready to fly at me and bite me, or her tail-end, with heels itching to fly up and kick me. Paul Jones, however, ran in at her, and, risking a nip in the pants or a cow-kick in the ribs, with a Ju Jitsu-like tackle got hold of her off fore, and, doubling it up like a mainspring under her, exhorted me to mount, proclaiming to me (punctuated with muffled curses to the now three-legged lady) that she was the most amiable lamb in Yunnan. Safely perched between her teeth and her heels, I hoped my solid weight would sober her, but I strongly advised myself, for all that, to keep a wary guard on my amiable lamb.

The way was pleasant and the gradual rise easy going, but our road lay through opium and opium and opium, white, red and purple, but mostly white.

As we looked back on the plain, of which we had a fine view, we tried to forget the opium and picture to ourselves the strange sight this valley must have presented when the valiant Captain Nescradin, in charge of the Great Khan's twelve thousand horsemen, gave battle to the King of Burma and his two thousand elephants, the story of which Marco Polo tells so graphically.

In 1272 the Great Khan sent an army to Vochang. The powerful and wealthy King of Burma, deciding that he did not like the idea of so large a force near his frontier, despatched an army, which, besides six thousand horse and foot, included a 'multitude of elephants' carrying on their backs battlements or castles of wood capable each of holding up to sixteen men. Captain Nes-

cradin became apprehensive at the news of the approach of this army, although his own men were tried and valiant veterans. He deployed his horsemen in a thick wood bordering the plain, to which, in the case of a furious charge of the elephants, they could retire, and from there 'annoy' the enemy with their arrows. The King of Burma took up his position on the plain about a mile from the Tartars, with his elephants in the van and his cavalry and foot in the rear. To the sounding of a great many warlike instruments he then gave the order to advance. The Tartars waited till, the enemy near enough, they charged out with great spirit to engage them. But the Tartar horses, unused to the sight of elephants, became terrified and their riders could not control them, and all the while the enemy were gaining ground. Captain Nescradin, to deal with this unexpected complication, ordered his men to take their horses back to the wood, dismount and tie them to the trees, and then to advance on foot and to direct their arrows upon the elephants only. The elephants, smarting with the pain of their wounds, became ungovernable, and, impelled by rage and fear, rushed into another part of the wood, where, on account of the closeness of the branches, the battlements upon their backs were torn down with loud crashes and the men within them killed. The Tartars then remounted and charged the rest of the Burmese army, who, not being provided with armour as were the Great Khan's men, soon had the worst of the fray, till, all arrows being expended, the battle became one of swords and maces, and the King of Burma, seeing the plain strewn with dead, found himself compelled to take flight with the remnants of the troops that were still left to him.

The result of this battle led to the Great Khan importing elephants from Burma and employing them in his armies. It must have been an amazing sight to see these huge creatures making their way along the Burma Road, not wide enough in many places for two horses to pass each other. An elephant is, however, wise enough not to put his whole weight on any going, up or down hill, till he has satisfied himself as to its capability of bearing his weight. Putting one foot at a time on any suspicious place he will test it carefully first, and of course has the well-known trick of whisking anything off his back that he can reach with his trunk, living or load, to make a holding over swampy ground. Rivers have no terror for him.

From Yuan Chang, Marco Polo says you go down a great hill for two days to the 'province of Machay, whyche lyeth towardes the middle dayc or South' adjoining the Indias, and through this province you travel fifteen days' journey through desert mountains 'where there be many Elephants and other wilde beastes, for that country is not inhabited. Also there is found Unicornes'.

In his introduction to Frampton's Elizabethan translation of the travels of Marco Polo, 1929, N. M. Penzer says that after Vochang (Yuan Chang) 'the itinerary now becomes very confusing and it is not possible to trace it with certainty across the frontier'.

Some authorities trace Polo's route to Bhamo, some by the Shweli River to Mien.

So far our road had coincided with Polo's authentic route; but we were not out to follow in the Venetian's steps but to make our way along, and continue now, by what was popularly known as the 'Burma Road' to Bhamo.

Through pleasant uplands thick with fine trees we steadily mounted up, until, in a dark forest dell, having gained the summit at 7,000 feet, the ignominious fate of many a Tartar horseman befell me. The amiable lamb and I had already had a passage or two by the way. When I wanted to hurry, she would deliberately dally to toy with a wayside flower, perhaps snatching the poor pretty thing to dangle from her yellow teeth; when I thought it wise to go slow, she would whisk round a blind corner or sidle full steam at some wretched laden coolie, and, wherever the roadside was precipitous, she would walk so near the outside edge that, with one of my legs always dangling over the abyss, I felt that she was suggesting I should fling a leaded rope and shout, for her entertainment, "By the mark—twain . . . thousand!"

We were just contemplating a midday halt, and I had taken my foot out of the stirrup to dismount, when the amiable lamb decided that she had had enough of me, or it may have been that her nerves not being what they should be she saw an ivory-tusked ghost in the forest's dark depth. Who knows? Anyway, her four feet left the ground together, her head went down, and with a conjuror's quickness she made herself into an inverted V —and sent me flying.

I came down no end of a wallop, and, to her intense satisfac-

tion no doubt, I lay there for a few seconds completely winded. Fortunately for me, however, I came down on grass and not on rocks, and the damage was nothing worse than bruises. But it was the hardest grass I have ever hit! The score was decidedly one up to the amiable lamb and one down to me!

I soon found consolation in the excellent picnic luncheon that hospitable Mrs. Payne had provided us with: and through luncheon Lankester and I talked of the China Inland Mission, and what a wonderful and devoted set of people they are, all over China—God bless them!—starting from the days of the Great Seven:—Montagu Beauchamp, Stanley Smith and Bishop Cassels, all three Old Reptonians, C. K. Studd, the two Polhills, and Hoste, the only one now still alive.

The second half of the day's march, after we had crossed the watershed, was downhill all the way, a 2,000-feet drop, with a grand view of the high range of mountains ahead which we hoped to cross the next day at about 8,000 feet.

At the bottom of the descent we passed through a village called Leng Shui Ching, *Cold Water Well.*

As we reached Pu Piao, *Precious Market*, away to the north, the mountains piled up in imposing ragged rhythm to 11,000 feet, snow-covered and thirty miles off up the valley of the Salween River. As the sun began to set, they stood out bold and black against the blue sky, and then against 'the painted Heav'ns so full of state', until at last the moon took charge of the spangled sky.

Tomorrow we hoped to cross the Salween River, its valley painted by hearsay with every horror:—shrouded with fogs, red, yellow and blue, of which the red was the most deadly; infested with flies, mosquitoes and innumerable unwinged pests; and reigned over by a wet-blanket demon that lurked in the river bed, rising to wrap itself round any unfortunate who trespassed into its waters, and dragging him down into its mysterious depths never more to be seen.

CHAPTER XXVIII

# TO CAMP BY THE SALWEEN RIVER

*Sunday, April 6th*

HAVING been told by Paul Jones that we must at all costs be off early, we were up betimes and off by six.

Leaving the little lake-like valley of Pu Piao, we thought we should easily make the crossing of the Salween in good enough time to reach Lao Chai, half-way up the 6,000-feet climb on the opposite bank, by nightfall.

It was a lovely morning. The road followed a stream round an arm of the hills until we suddenly lost sight of it in a deep cleft, but caught sight of it again meandering through a green cultivated amphitheatre until it, at length, lost itself in low hills away to the north.

After we had been going for two hours, Paul Jones peremptorily gave word to halt for the midday meal! The midday meal! It was just eight o'clock—we expostulated; and I started to remount the amiable lamb, who, evidently delighted at having had the last word yesterday, was behaving with coy decorum today. We represented that we must push on if we wanted to get down to the river and up to Lao Chai by that evening.

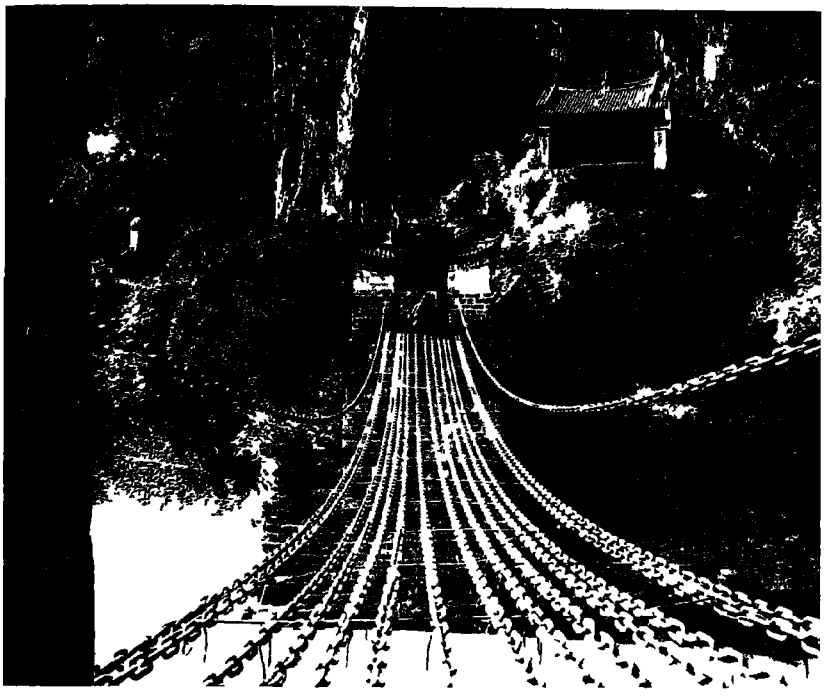
Not a man jack of them would budge.

"Impossible!" was the pirate's ultimatum, and, although the contract was to get us through to Teng Yueh in three days, nothing would move them.

Growing more and more exasperated, we waited for four hours, then, seeing 'Nothing doing' still written on the sullen face of each mulcteer, we started to walk on by ourselves.

Down a corridor walled in by grassy hills, we came across some francolin, that scuttled for shelter. Again, quit of the noise of the caravan and on the quiet sandy road, we had had a chance to get a glimpse of a little of the bird life of the hills.

The path then plunged down a densely wooded gorge, from where we soon had our first sight of the Salween valley far below us. For seven miles we steadily descended, accompanied by a pretty stream, which sometimes played over the road or the road shared the river's bed. After a descent of some 3,000 feet, we found ourselves on the bank of the mysterious Salween.



MEKONG BRIDGE STRIPPED FOR REPAIR



EASTERN SPAN OF THE SALWEEN BRIDGE



SHANS
(note silver wrist circlets)

See page 120



THE END OF THE JOURNEY
Dr Bradley and R T Tankester

The bridge was in working order—that was something!—and we should not have to repeat our experiences at the Mekong, and so risk having to come within reach of the embrace of the ever-lurking blanket-fiend.

The bridge was attractive, a chain suspension like the Mekong, but in two spans. The first, the longer, cleared the main stream to an island of massive rock; and the second half, a separate bridge, set off again at a different angle from the rock to cross what was now a shingle-bed glittering with granite boulders, but which in the rainy season would become one river with the main swollen stream.

The setting of the bridge was not as impressive as that of the Mekong, but, as we stood delighting in the cool breeze on the bridge, we enjoyed the scenery around us. The valley in sight was longer and wider than that of the Mekong gorge, and precipitous mountains, clad with fine trees, enclosed a fairly wide valley floor of little rounded hills and rice-fields. The river, which swept down in a short rapid below the bridge, became lazy and deep and perhaps ninety yards wide farther down.

We wandered over the second bridge to a tea-house on the farther bank, and sitting ourselves under a great banyan-tree, made the acquaintance of some cheery Shan tribes-people, gaily clad with huge turbans.

A crowd of small children gathered round, their little tummies like footballs—but the peculiar dusky yellow of their skins told me at once that their little pot-bellies were not swollen from bolted, badly-cooked rice, as is often the case, but that the distention was caused by very much enlarged spleens due to malaria.

Then the most awful object lagged aimlessly up.

It wasn't until some years afterwards that I came across—in one of the supplementary papers of the Royal Geographical Society—Mr. Grosvenor's account of his journey along this part of the road, when he went to investigate the murder of Mr. Margary. But precisely the same apparition that he encountered by the Salween Bridge sixty-six years ago came to watch us drink our tea. Grosvenor's pen being more graphic than any words of mine, I will give his own description of the phantom:—

'. . . . sitting in the gateway was a young man whose corpse-like aspect at once drew our attention: his face was greyish-black, and what should have been the whites of his eyes were

literally and actually green. As we approached he slowly turned those horrible orbs upon us, with a dazed and other-world motion that was most ghastly. He was evidently in a severe stage of some form of fever. We administered a dose of quinine, which he swallowed without hesitation, and without interest. There were six other cases of the same sort in the village.'

One after another a series of these piteous objects presented themselves to us, whilst their relatives related how devils had taken possession of them; evil spirits paid them regular visits, speaking to them from the walls, rocking their floors and furniture and even tipping the bed beneath them from side to side. Different people had these fiendish visitations on different days. Each had his own devil who came punctually every second or third day or night.

I did what I could—which was precious little—for these sad cases, and then we went back to cool ourselves again on the bridge—for there is no place so fascinating to linger on as a bridge with the water swirling below.

I hoped at that time it would not be in the too long future before the crying need of these people I had seen would be recognised, and their age-long neglect and ignorant superstitions rectified. The evil-coloured fogs were but the miasma rising in rainbow shades according to the position of the sun and reflection. The gruesome blanket-fiend was sudden cramp, the result of heated limbs in icy water. The regularly visiting devils were the delirium of malaria, which (unlike other fevers which work up to a crisis and fall) goes on and on, occurring remittingly at regular quotidian, tertian, or other intervals.

Sir Ronald Ross has discovered the name of the devil that caused the trouble in this haunted valley and in other places. It is the anopheles mosquito. The floor of the valley is only 2,500 feet above the sea, an unusually low level among these mountain heights. It is, in fact, the lowest level in Western Yunnan, which accounts for the presence of the malignant mosquito.

So sinister was the repute of this valley that travellers made every effort to hasten across it before sunrise, their scarves clapped to their mouths against the imagined evil air, and their eyes averted from the yellow apparition they might possibly encounter.

The Yunnanese were the fever victims. Accustomed as they

were to live on plateaus and hills ranging from anything above 4,000 feet, they were unable to withstand the fevers of the lower altitude, from which they, however, had the sense to migrate to villages on a higher level in the summer months, coming down again to cultivate as soon as the cooler weather set in. The Shans, accustomed to live in lower altitudes, seemed to be practically immune.

We waited and waited, somewhat anxiously, but in vain, for the mules and ponies to catch us up; and we had been on the bridge for two hours before, at last, Ah Yang appeared with a message from the muleteers telling us to go back—if you please!—about five miles. They were going to camp there for the night.

This upset us very much, for we knew that it meant that we should not reach Teng Yueh until Wednesday. By about 5.30 p.m. we thought perhaps we had better go back, loath as we were to retrace our steps—the only consolation that a camp on the hill-top might be cooler than one on the river level. We had not gone far, however, when we caught sight of the pack-ponies in the distance, so back we went to the bridge again and waited.

Paul Jones had thought better of it and moved the rest on. We found a camping place, some little distance from the village and river, and hoisted our mosquito nets for the first time on our journey, and looked forward to a pleasant sleep under the stars.

CHAPTER XXIX

# TO KAN LAN CHA. *Olive Tree Market*

*Monday, April 7th.*

WE had a pleasant sleep—but not for long. At 1 a.m. it came on to rain! With a scrimmage we managed to get our mosquito nets down and to cover ourselves with our yellow oil-cloth anti-vermin sheets, and lay in bed with our umbrellas up. When dawn broke we roared with laughter at the "Heath Robinson" caricatures we made. But we managed to keep ourselves and all our kit bone-dry.

Fortunately the rain cleared off when it was time to get up, and we breakfasted and packed in fine weather, but, no sooner were we started than it came on to pour again, and it kept on without ceasing all day.

Nevertheless, we made our longest journey of all that day, 110 li, about thirty-three miles, with a climb of over 4,000 feet to start with, and with only one halt to feed the mules on the way up. We saw nothing of the countryside through the cloud and rain; all that was evident was that, as the Chinese proverb says—'Every blade of grass has its drop of dew'—and every fern-frond, flower-petal and teeming leaf too. However, we trudged on, up the thickly wooded way, all glad to have done with the Salween Valley.

Passing Hsiang Po, *Elephant's Neck*, we reached the highest point, about 8,000 feet, by midday, and then dropped down 500 feet or so to reach a stopping place for luncheon. Here, in a shed, Ah Yang soon had a great wood fire burning, by which we warmed and dried ourselves whilst he most efficiently prepared our luncheon. Never, I think, have I relished anything more than that simple hot luncheon of rice, soup, biscuits and peanut butter, with chocolate to round it off.

We started off again dry, but it was not long before we were once more soaked through. The paved parts of the road were horribly slippery and the animals skated about if they could not get off the paving to where a rough track had in some places been worn at the side. The little skewbald came down a nasty straddle; but they are plucky little beasts, and, as soon as its load was lifted, up it got and plugged on again as heartily as ever.

The coolies we passed had crampons on their straw sandals,

and some were protected by their *tso-yi*, a stiff cape and hood in one which they put right over their heads. It was made of palm-bark, with the hairy side outside, and had a curious appearance like monkey fur.

The afternoon march was a steady decline. At length we came to the Shweli River, but there was no lingering on this bridge. The Shweli is smaller, and we crossed it at a little higher altitude than we had crossed the Salween. It flows through a much wider valley, but the two rivers share much the same reputation, at any rate lower down.

The building of the new road, which comes up from Lashio and runs partly through the Shweli and Salween valleys farther south than the road on which we were, was accomplished only after great difficulty, owing to the enormous number of cases of fever amongst the coolies; and there is a story, which sounds most probable, that a certain stretch could only be finished by a company of women, led by a powerful Amazon, who seemed to be immune from what is undoubtedly a form of malaria.

The French, who built that wonderfully engineered railway from Laokai—on the border between Indo-China and China—to Yunnan-Fu, encountered the same difficulties in the lower valleys: and it is said that as many as forty thousand coolies succumbed there in a similar way.

Shortly after the Shweli we reached Kan Lan Cha, *Olive Tree Market*—very tired, but pleased with the thought that after all we had every chance of reaching Teng Yueh by Tuesday, and being able to keep our appointment with Mr. Wyatt Smith.

Ronald Lankester had walked the whole of the way that day: a good performance with its steep ups and downs.

CHAPTER XXX

# TO TENG YUEH. *Fly away from Chou*

*Tuesday, April 8th*

FROM *Olive Tree Market* we had our last stiff climb, and then passed through a pleasant undulating country of grassy downs. We kept up a good pace, and by the midday halt had covered half way.

Soon after we started again the whole of the Teng Yueh plain came into view, lying between 5,000 and 6,000 feet above sea-level and surrounded by beautiful hills and mountains. The flat plain took on in the distance the image of a large inland lake, the villages sprinkling it standing out like leafy islands; and, far away at the other end of the plain, set in a beautiful environment of rivers and temples, we saw the Treaty Port.

The term Treaty Port* was given to those cities of China in which foreigners were allowed to reside and carry on business by reason of agreements to that effect in various treaties. Foreigners were not allowed to hold land, or carry on business in any other places, though this restriction did not apply to missionaries. Foreign Powers established Consulates in Treaty Ports, and duties on exports and imports were levied according to a tariff fixed by treaty. Later, however, more cities were opened to traders, not by treaty but voluntarily by the Chinese Government, on the same footing as the others. Shanghai, the most important of the Treaty Ports, was opened in 1842. Teng Yueh became one in 1899. It is one hundred and eighty miles from Bhamo, and is called Momein by the Burmese. Its chief exports at the time of its opening were silk, orpiment and musk. Orpiment is arsenic trisulphide, from which 'king's yellow' and 'realgar (red)' are derived. Musk is the secretion of a small hornless deer which is mercilessly hunted. It is extensively used in China in medicine and perfumery and in the preservation of clothes from moth.

As we made our way down the descent to the plain, our interest was aroused by four figures in the distance, which, when we reached the level, we found to be Mr. Wyatt Smith, who, with his escort, had walked out to meet and welcome us, a gesture of real friendliness and politeness.

* The term Treaty Port no longer has any meaning, owing to the abolition of the Extra Territoriality Treaties in 1943.

His escort consisted of two mounted men in blue cotton uniforms, blue putties and blue turbans, the Ma Fu (Master of the Horse!—or stable-boy) and an underling, and a man to carry the Consul's gun, in case he came across any small game worth shooting.

"Somewhat risky, taking this journey," the Consul said. "Although since General P'u Shuming has been shot things must be quieter. Tell me, is it true all I have heard about P'u—the manner of his final arrest and then death on the parade ground of the capital before thousands of spectators?"

I told him the story as I knew it. It is as follows:—

P'u was responsible for the taking into captivity of Mr. Parker of the Inland Mission, who made such a marvellous escape. Then, shortly afterwards, P'u's men waylaid Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor within a few miles of Yunnan-Fu on their return from a tremendously long and strenuous tour, which they had made up to the borders of Mongolia and Tibet. Through province after province they had been very near marauding bands, but had never seen a brigand until the moment when, literally just outside the capital of Yunnan, they were stopped and carried off. P'u was, no doubt, also responsible for the captures of two other missionaries, Mr. Metcalfe and Mr. Gowman.

He was a man of extraordinarily ferocious appearance. Short and thick-set, he was very uncouth. As a bandit lord he wore a huge turban of black cloth, a belt of silver dollars and a foreign khaki overcoat. There was very little of the soldier about him. He was an out-and-out brigand, who would as soon shoot you as look at you, a complete desperado when hard pressed by Government soldiers or in desperate mood.

Strange to say, in the fortunes of war this very man was made a General in the Governor's army, and was put in charge of the stamping out of brigandage—a post which eventually led to his downfall and death. A Governor had returned in triumph to his old post, after having been driven out by a rival. It was for helping him to come back that P'u was pardoned for his brigandage and made a General.

I met him at close quarters twice. First at a reception given by the reinstated Governor, where—it seemed a strange spectacle to me—P'u, now a General and very smartly dressed, swaggered about talking to everyone, including his erstwhile captive, Mr. Parker.

On another occasion I spent a whole day in the train with P'u! He was going, with a fairly strong bodyguard of soldiers, armed with Mauser pistols, to visit his native town. His family, once poor, had now grown rich and important through the loot which their brigand relation had gathered. He came and sat down in my carriage and insisted on talking to me. I found him most aggressive. He wanted to know everything about me and my personal affairs. Suddenly he said:—"This is a much better carriage than mine! Why have you got a better carriage than me?" I shrugged my shoulders, and replied that it was an ordinary first-class carriage. "First Class!" He went off to find out what class he was travelling, and was furious to find he had third-class tickets. Of course he must travel in the highest class, he blustered, and despite the fact that there was not a seat left in the first class, he had all his belongings brought in and insisted on room being made for him in our carriage.

That was the last time I saw P'u until I caught a glimpse of him, being carried in a state chair and bowing to the crowds that had collected to see him pass, on the way to his death.

I had never seen the streets so crowded, and as for the parade ground it was packed with thousands of people. In fact, it was difficult for the chair coolies to get General P'u, now a prisoner, to the spot where he was to be shot.

Why this death sentence and change from power to helplessness?

It was found that, whilst outwardly in charge of the suppression of brigandage, he was allowing his old followers to carry on, as long as they paid him well.

Early one morning his house was surrounded and he was taken prisoner to the Governor's Yamen. He was tried and convicted.

Things were, however, made as easy and as 'honourable' as possible, to save P'u's face.

He was allowed to give a feast for all his relatives and friends, with himself as host.

A magnificent coffin was bought. Presents were made to him. He demanded that he should be shot by an officer, and that he should have four coolies to carry his sedan. It was on this last journey of his through the streets to his execution that I caught sight of him, bowing like a grandee from his chair to the crowds, who regarded him with curiosity and a certain amount of appre-

hension, so great had been his reputation for cruelty as a brigand.

As we made our way across the plain with Mr. Wyatt Smith, I saw a man doing what I had often seen being done near Pakhoi, where the quail in clouds come in to settle.

For, some little distance away from the road, he was walking stealthily along a path between two rice-fields, holding above his head, umbrella fashion, a net about twelve feet in diameter, on flat bamboo supports. Where he thought there might be some quail, he squatted down suddenly so that the net rested on the ground. He hoped thus to snare in its meshes anything from ten to sixty birds. On he went, patiently stalking and squatting, until at last we lost sight of him behind a clump of graceful, feathery bamboo.

Passing by the city, with its typical thirty-foot, brick-built and crenelated walls, which enclosed many fields as well as buildings in the usual way, and on through extensive suburbs, we came eventually to the Consulate with the Union Jack flying.

Many business people found it more convenient to establish themselves outside the city walls, so that they did not have to tip the Captain of the Guard to get in and out after sunset when the gates were closed.

The Consulate was stone-built in European style and palatial. It had only recently been completed, and as yet electric light had not been installed nor water laid on. There were, however, baths, big hot baths, their luxury in no way diminished by the fact that the water had been hand-carried. Clean clothes and a batch of home mail with good news made our contentment complete.

A polished table, with crystal plate and china glittering in the candlelight, added to the enjoyment of a good dinner, served by waiting-men in their long blue coats. What wonderful cooks the Chinese are, and how they seize upon any special occasion to show off their accomplishments.

After dinner we enjoyed looking at the picture papers from home, in comfortable armchairs. The house, sparsely but sufficiently furnished in European style, was the bare house of a grass-widower. A châtelaine would have made a lovely home of it, the spacious rooms, the lovely setting and the good climate here supplying everything that could be desired.

The only drawback to Teng Yueh was its remoteness, for it was a full week's journey from there to Bhamo, the nearest place

of importance. Remoteness is a serious drawback. Men and women in these lonely outposts, where often there is little work to do, are thrown so entirely on their own resources that unless they are able to engross themselves on some absorbing hobby, time must inevitably drag with a heavy hand.

"If one could fly down to Bhamo for a week-end occasionally, it would be grand," said our host. "By the way, talking of flying, do you know what Teng Yueh means?

"Like so many places on this Chinese border—we are the most westerly and the farthest from Peking of any of the Treaty Ports—Teng Yueh rejoices in many names, up to nine, I think; some Shan, some Chinese, some Burmese. To trace the origins of their meanings reminds me of Kipling's story of the miner who borrowed a dictionary but found the stories too various. One rendering of Teng Yueh, however, is piquant. Nearby, there was once a place called Chou; but Chou falling out of favour a new city sprang up, known as Teng Yueh Chou, which literally translated means 'Fly away from Chou!' "

CHAPTER XXXI

# AT TENG YUEH

*Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, April 9th, 10th and 11th*

EXTENSIVE lawns had been laid out round the Consulate, and a morning stroll in the garden gave me an example of the marvellous growth of shrubs and flowers in the soil and climate of Yunnan. A wisteria, which in England would have taken years to establish, had, like Job's gourd, practically sprung up overnight—but unlike Job's gourd, it continued to flourish and flower. Carnations and roses, and many English annuals made a lovely display.

Yunnan is certainly a paradise for gardeners. Perhaps there is nothing that so quickly makes one feel at home in a strange country as to find familiar and well-beloved flowers one has planted oneself blossoming in less than no time in a new garden.

Suttons must very well understand this, for they have a plan by which they are ready to send a tin of vegetable and flower seeds to any missionary of the Church Missionary Society who will take the trouble to write to the headquarters of the Society in London and take advantage of the generous offer. Over and over again I have seen the delight and satisfaction given by gardens which had been sown with these seeds.

During the morning we called at the Customs Offices, substantial buildings in the Chinese style, also outside the city wall. We dined with the Commissioner of Customs, Mr. E. A. Macdonald, and his Assistant, Mr. Wilkinson, that night. They informed us that, since the French railway from Haiphong to Yunnan-Fu had been built, trade on the Burma Road had greatly diminished.

The rest of our time was chiefly spent in sight-seeing. One afternoon we walked out to a waterfall, which reminded me of the Kegon waterfall in Japan, up above Nikko. The two waterfalls were almost identical in height and flow, both in the distance looking like narrow silver ribbons: but I was glad to hear that the Teng Yueh fall had not the same tragic history connected with it as Kegon, noted for its numerous suicides.

The temples, like so many Chinese temples, were usually in bad repair but crowded; contrasting with the temples I had seen in Japan, which were usually beautifully kept but empty.

On Friday morning the Consul told me that his three head

servants were suffering from earache, and I offered to see them.

The head butler came first. I found him suffering from *otitis media* (inflammation of the middle ear).

"Your hair is well cut," I said to him. "Have you a good barber close here?"

"Yes, very good barber," he replied. "Not living very close. His shop inside the city wall, next the theatre and the dyeing company."

To the second butler, who had the same complaint, I said:

"There is a very good dyeing company here, isn't there?"

"Yes, I Shang," he replied. "They dyeing and rolling plenty stuff. I see when I go to the barber."

To the cook I said:

"Many good theatres in Teng Yueh?"

"Best one next my barber's. Plenty big band playing."

I told the Consul I would take a stroll until he had finished his office work.

It is rare to pass through any village in China without seeing the oldest member of the family at the spinning-wheel by the weaver's door, or hearing the sound of the hand-loom from within. In some dark corner a man or woman keeps the shuttle busy all day long. Working one wooden lever with the feet, and another overhead with a hand-cord, the tedious, monotonous work goes on incessantly. The white cloth is only used for mourners, the rest is sent to the dyers.

It was impossible to miss the dyers' field as I entered the West Gate—A Field of the Cloth of Blue. Yards and yards of indigo-dyed cotton material lay drying; whilst a man, balancing himself on a heavy stone and see-sawing it backwards and forwards with his feet, polished and wound one length. Most exacting work, it seemed to me.

Next door was the barber's. I strolled past, to make sure it was the right one with the theatre the other side.

Yes, there was the theatre, and, being market day, it was already in full swing. The front of the barber's shop and the theatre were both open to the street, as is customary, so I could keep an eye on both.

The inevitable historical play was going on. A man in a huge black beard was ranting in a loud falsetto, arms akimbo. The villain was slain, so a cloth was laid over the place to show that he was dead, whilst he took a comfortable seat in full view of

the audience. A mountaineer overcame an Alp by walking up a stool and a chair and on to a table. The band played loudly at each triumph of the hero's.

Meanwhile, in the barber's shop, a fat Chinese who had just finished a shampoo with hot towels was having his ears cleaned and the hairs inside them tweaked out. Then came a massage. As he reclined, the barber stood above him making wild passes in the air with his arms, then suddenly pulled one of his victim's limbs with a violent jerk. Then more feints and passes, and the barber struck one clenched fist into the palm of his other hand, and—smack, plump—he punched his patient in some unexpected portion of his anatomy. I expected to see the client leap up and fly, but, strange to say, he seemed to like it.

The fat Chinese was evidently thoroughly enjoying the pulling and pummelling. So I called the barber outside for a moment's conversation.

"It is you who have made the Consul's servants so smart?" I asked.

"I Shang," he answered, with a bow. Evidently he knew who I was.

I then gently pointed out to him that if he didn't clean his ear tweezers, his clients would soon begin to wonder why they all got earache after visiting the best barber in Teng Yueh.

He opened his eyes in bewilderment. Boil the instruments he used for the ear-toilet!

"Not boil," I said, "you will lose all your trade and be ruined. Boil, and you will become the most famous barber in Western Yunnan." At last he seemed to grasp the idea, and, bowing, we parted.

On the way home I passed a school. As I listened to the sounds coming from the large single class-room, I realised that here were boys studying as boys before them had studied in China for hundreds of years; each class repeating its particular lesson aloud, oblivious to the surrounding din. Every boy learns by memory thé Chinese classics; the three character classics to begin with, and then the more advanced classics. The constant repetition and memorising, whilst not always conveying to the mind or thought of the pupil the actual meaning of what is being learnt, seems to develop amongst the Chinese prodigious memories.

I have found this especially noticeable amongst those who

study the Bible. It is not long before an earnest student has memorised whole chapters and then whole books of the Bible. How well I remember an instance of this which occurred when I was preaching to a very attentive audience of lepers. Every now and then, when trying to remember how some verse of the Scriptures went in Chinese, I would appeal to one of my congregation. Without hesitation, I would be given the reference with chapter and verse, no matter from what part of the Scriptures I was trying to quote. Quite recently I have heard of a young Chinese pastor who can quote the whole Bible by heart. An amazing feat—but he is only one of many who seem to possess this wonderfully developed power of memorising.

Another example of which I happen to know relates to the first examination of students at the Hong Kong University, for their final degree before qualifying in Medicine and Surgery. The examiners were astonished, when looking over the papers, to find page after page of some well-known medicine or surgery book written out word for word as though directly copied from the book, instead of being written entirely from memory.

The Consul anticipated all our needs. He engaged fresh mules for us, as we had said good-bye for ever, we hoped, to Paul Jones and the amiable lamb. Our difficulties were smoothed in regard to cashing money. The only worry that presented itself was that Ah Yang told me on Friday—we were leaving the next day—that he wanted to go home. This was a blow. Whether he had met a friend with whom he wanted to travel, or what the reason was it was impossible to find out. We said we hoped he would think better of it, and come on with us in the morning.

The Consul waved aside all our efforts to thank him for his delightful hospitality. After all, we were only missionaries, we said, and had not expected anything; but he turned the tables on us, and said that our visit had meant much to him in this out-of-the-world place.

CHAPTER XXXII

## TO CHE TAO. *Sweet Bean Village*

*Saturday, April 12th*

WE started on the last stage of our overland journey fairly late, not getting away until the civilised hour of nine.

Our way, from now on, followed down river valleys, today it ran by the Teng Yueh River, which fed the East Taping or Nam Ti; which in its turn flowed into the Taping River, an important tributary of the Irrawaddy, which it joined at Bhamo.

From Bhamo we should go on by river steamer to Mandalay, and from thence by train to Rangoon; I to catch the mail for England and Lankester his coastal steamer.

There is always a certain fascination in following down a river valley, and it was a pleasant change for us who had for so long been crossing mountain ranges and the rivers that flowed between them. Today the scenery consisted of endless paddy, with bare hills in the distance.

A little village named Che Tao, *Sweet Bean Village*, was our halting place for the night. We had chosen this place as we expected to find there a missionary and his wife whom we had known many years ago.

When we called at the Mission House we were sorry to find that our friends had left. We were greeted by a tall fair young man with tragedy written in the deep lines on his face. We hesitated to accept his invitation to come in, but as he insisted, we could not well refuse, and followed him into a room so littered with papers and books that he had to clear some away to make places for us to sit down.

We learnt from him that he had lately lost his young wife, and was now trying to smother his loneliness in applying his time to learning the Shan language and mastering some of its dialects. The Shan tribes are numerous, but on the whole their language is the same. He had, it appeared, already worked for some years amongst the Shans in various places, and, although the men wore much the same dress, he could often pick out from the women's clothes to what tribe they belonged.

Some women wore their turbans—big turbans wound on a

bamboo frame—top-hat-wise, some Napoleon-wise: and the trimmings on their clothes were different. One set of women wore coloured fringes on their turbans, others had coloured stripes bordering their blue garments, others again dressed themselves in a sort of long gaily striped sack with a hole for the head and short sleeves, and their silver ornaments varied.

Most of the villages he had visited boasted at least one doctor and a medicine stall in the bazaar, but the drugs were usually, he thought, mere quackery, their only worth lying in their purchaser's faith. There was a good deal of fever in the low-lying districts and smallpox took its toll, though it was evident from their pitted faces that many recovered. Influenza epidemics, strange as it might seem, sometimes occurred even in the remotest places.

To make room for the tea-things which his servant brought in, he stuffed his books pell-mell into a large red-lacquered chest, which he said had been given to him by some notable, bringing out from its depths a peculiar-looking ball.

"Made of rice," he said smiling. "It is what they throw at their marriage ceremonies. A fashion which, it is to be hoped, won't spread to the West!"

After giving us a sumptuous tea, he begged that we would stay with him for the night; but realising that unexpected guests might be rather a strain on his hospitality, we explained that our goods had already gone to the rest-house, and bidding goodbye to the sad and lonely student we left him to his laborious studies.

The village and the houses were small, and here, as in all villages which are not big enough to sport a surrounding wall, each end of the village street was barricaded at night.

The barricade consisted of stout posts that fitted into slots, set in their places each sunset and taken out at dawn, the gates within being wooden and fairly substantial. The village thus made itself safe against unwanted visitors.

The shutting of the gates was, however, no sign of curfew. Little oil lamps began to flicker on every street stall. The bargaining and gossiping continued for long after we had turned in, and, until late, we could hear a man tinkling his bell and calling out "*Mai min pau!*" ("Buy hot cakes!")

We were lucky in getting accommodation in the quiet, clean and roomy rest-house. From Teng Yueh on, we came across first

attempts which the Chinese had made at building and equipping rest-houses, spurred on by the example of the fine rest-houses of the Burmese Government.

We were thankful, too, that Ah Yang had changed his mind and come on with us, and that we had not to bother about getting a new servant into our ways.

CHAPTER XXXIII

# TO OLD KANAI

*Sunday, April 13th*

I AWOKE at 2.30 a.m., thinking it was an hour later. I called Ah Yang, who brought us our hot water by three-thirty, so we had to get up. We were away soon after five under a nearly full moon, which lighted our way till dawn, an hour later. But the early start turned out all to the good, and saved us from having to travel in the heat of the day.

We had not too much time to spare for this stage of the route. We had learned at Teng Yueh that our boat from Bhamo would leave on the following Saturday at eight in the morning, which meant that we must be in Bhamo on Friday.

This stretch of the journey should have taken us seven days, but the Consul, who wanted us to stay on with him an extra day, had arranged by wire for us to make the last two stages in one by car.

Our muleteers were behaving well under the leadership of a thick-set, jovial fellow, ironically called by his friends 'Thunder Cloud', and they seemed willing to press on as fast as possible.

It meant another Sunday of hard going, but Sunday was the same as any other day of the week to the people hereabouts.

We passed through country in which the surrounding hills were inhabited by Shans, who offered a striking contrast to the people of the regions we had traversed.

Lords of the Hills—Lords of the Sunrise—Lords of the Sunset, any of these picturesque names, by which they are known, suited them. Upstanding, healthy and cheerful, they bore a prosperous air. In one party we came across, the women's dress was particularly gay, their robes thick with embroidery and their turbans rich with ornaments.

The going we found trying. The loose soil was subject to continual landslides, and this twenty-mile section was difficult, it seemed, to keep in passable condition.

It got hotter and hotter each day as we reached lower altitudes.

At Old Kanai we found a horse-inn with a large paved courtyard away from the stables in which we could rest. The people

here appeared much cleaner in themselves and in their habits; probably, owing to the warmer climate, they washed more.

We spent the afternoon shopping.

Entering a poky little place, we discovered a silent old man occupying himself with his parchment ledger, his paint brushes and Indian ink in a dirty jade tray beside him.

A talkative young man took us in charge. Setting two arm-chairs for us, he quickly produced a tray of tea and set it on a small table between us. We knew that we must be prepared to spend plenty of time, and that hurry would be fatal. Around us were glass cases, some hung on the walls, and all lined with white paper on to which amber and jade necklaces, bangles and rings were sewn with red cotton. Special pieces had a case to themselves.

Waving such things aside as not worthy of our notice, the young Chinese brought forward, one at a time, various boxes, the contents of each of which he unfolded from a wrapper of cotton.

"*Hua hsuch tai tsao,* moss entangled in melting snow," and he handed me a lump of jade. Its appearance at once made one think of melted snow, frozen, and veined with clouds of shaded green.

He produced next an exquisitely coloured piece of Lavender Jadeite from Burma; and a tray with samples of sea-green, celadon, lettuce-green, grass-green and spinach-green jade, naming them in turn. "I also have yellow, black or cream—'Mutton-fat' English name. Any of these I can carve for you. My men working on the premises."

We must choose something already worked, we told him, but we would be interested to know how he procured all these lovely pieces in the rough, and also how his men worked.

This brought the old man to life, and he opened up suddenly.

"Same kind of tools as have been used for hundreds of years," he said, opening a door into a room where we could see two Chinese at work at a table. One was using a cutting disc, the other a revolving cylinder, both tools driven by the feet.

Then coming over to us the old man went on:—

"You gentlemen know the old story? . . . Long ago, in the far-away north, straight-sided mountains were made of jade. Men rode yaks in the snow, made fires to split off big rocks of it, and rolled them over the precipices into the valleys to collect. But not like that now!

"I go down to the auctions in Burma now, where jade and amber in the rough are put up for sale. Much luck in buy. One time I buy piece for very little—that piece turned out to be the best piece of jade we ever worked. All a gamble. No one knows what will be the yield. One time, I bid for beautiful-looking bit, three or four feet square. Everyone bidding. Certainly, everyone thinking, when that bit is worked it will turn out something good. I buy it. When my workmen start on it, we find it absolutely no value!"

"I suppose," I said, "you have to have a guard for the transport from Burma?"

"Guard!" He shook his head. "It just come up by coolie. Guard! Oh no. Too many people taking interest!"

At that he closed down and retired again to his desk, and the young man again took the stage.

"No want screens?—and no, not gods? You liking a plaque with the flowers of the four seasons?—the peony for spring, the lotus for summer, the chrysanthemum for autumn, and the plum for winter.

"Fishes?—a leaping carp?—the king of fish. You been travelling, sirs—the carp is the symbol of vigour, endurance, perseverance and power.

"Or birds? A duck?—a lucky amulet against drowning. You are crossing the water? Or a pheasant—the phœnix.

"Or a dragon? This is a very beautiful dragon in white jade. See, he is perfect!—a head like a camel, ears like a cow, horns like a deer, eyes like a rabbit, neck like a snake, belly of frog, paws of tiger and claws of the hawk, and all covered with the scales of the carp."

"Something more every day," I suggested.

"I know," he said, "squirrel! He everywhere!" And he showed us a tiny squirrel tucked into a vine, in green jade. "Vine creep anywhere—squirrel, he jump anywhere!"

Monkeys, bats, tigers, hares, cormorants, elephants, doves . . .

I asked him to put a white jade paper-weight and pencil rest of the 'five hills', and the little green-jade squirrel aside for me whilst we looked at the amber.

The first thing he produced was a ball of red Burmite—a glorious fiery sun.

"For a king—not for me!" I smiled.

"For a king," he nodded.

He then brought out a large lump of golden amber, and, rubbing it, used it as a magnet to draw a feather from his dusting brush across the table; he also showed us specimens, containing flies, spiders, a centipede and a fir cone.

What pleased me most were little three-inch plaques of dark amber on which were carved animals, the carving and portrayal of each little animal being perfect.

Toad—at the edge of the wild wood with 'rocks, brambles and tree-roots behind'; and Fortescue's baby deer, with its head curved round on its shoulder, cuddled beneath a bush where its mother had pushed it for safety, were irresistible.

If I had not been travelling by mule caravan, I do not think I could have left behind me a set of carved ivory chessmen. The board, of sixty-four squares like ours, divided by a river, and the full set of men, consisting of a General with his Ministers, elephants, horses, chariots, cannon and soldiers.

When we had decided on our purchases, the old gentleman totted up our bill on his brown wooden abacus.

We put our beds out in the open courtyard that night, for coolness' sake; but it was difficult to sleep as the nearly full moon beat down with dazzling insistence.

Some people believe, and others do not, that it is unwise to sleep with the rays of the moon pouring down on an unprotected head for any length of time. Probably some people are more susceptible than others. I think there is a fair consensus of opinion among doctors, with experience of the tropics, that moonlight can have unpleasant effects.

What was it David, the Psalmist wrote?—'The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night'.

CHAPTER XXXIV

# TO HAWA SHUI KAI. *Small New Street*

*Monday, April 14th*

I KEPT waking up and looking at the clock; the moonlight seemed as bright as day. I woke Ah Yang at three-thirty, and we were away before six, in the cool of the morning.

We now came to a country of a completely different character. The great stems in the bamboo groves were three or four inches in diameter, and we passed numbers of huge wild india-rubber fig-trees (*ficus Elasticus*). One magnificent fellow, standing alone, was fit to lord it over any tree in park or forest. I should like to have known the age of that noble tree. Its branches must have cast their shade over nearly half an acre.

Away in the distance, mountains on either side framed a panorama of miles and miles of rice-fields, with everywhere buffalo pulling on their crude instruments and men at work.

The road, though innocent of any incline, was generally bad in surface, and in some places disappeared altogether in the mud and squelch of the paddy. At one place, the road was so deeply immersed that we had to take off our shoes and socks, as we were ahead of the ponies, and wade through.

We walked for nearly four hours whilst it was cool, and then rode our ponies to the end of the day's stage at Hawa Shui Kai, *Small New Street*, a little market village. This was our last Chinese resting place but one. We put up in a small inn where the vermin were horribly aggressive.

This Monday was five weeks from the time of our start. I had lost about 20 lb. in weight, for which I was glad; but Lankester had gained in weight. He had really needed a rest from his work, and the open-air life had done him good. On the way we had discussed many topics:—the good and bad effects of civilisation, whether new roads would help these people, whether their own form of life and customs were best for them without the importation of Western influences . . . but, although we differed on many points, we had no heated arguments to mar our excellent companionship.

CHAPTER XXXV

# TO MAN HSEIN. *Border Town*

*Tuesday, April 15th*

A THUNDERSTORM woke us at three-thirty, and, as we were again sleeping in the open, we had to stow our effects precipitately indoors.

The walls of this inn were adorned with Chinese proverbs, one of which ran:—'If you have a curse regard it as a blessing.' Certainly the storm had cleared the air and laid the dust, and starting at five-thirty, it was refreshingly cool for the first twelve miles.

Towards the end of the march we got on our ponies. Suddenly Lankester and his pony vanished before my eyes! The rotten road had given way and pony and rider had slipped into and been engulfed by the morass bordering the road.

My pony began to flounder, and I dismounted as quickly as I could. Out of what seemed to be a quicksand, Lankester managed to gain firmer ground, but his terror-stricken pony seemed helpless. At last the men got it over on to its side, and somehow it scrambled out, a very much relieved and quivering little animal.

When we reached Man Hsein, *Border Town*, the inevitable market day was in full swing. The village was packed with Shans. The women's gipsy-like garb was immensely picturesque, mostly red on a blue background. They were loaded with silver ornaments, bracelets right up their arms, heavy chains around their shoulders, stiff hoops around their necks and hips, and immense ear-rings drooping to their shoulders. From a distance they made a garish and fascinating pageant; but oh, they were so dirty, with unkempt hair, and teeth black from chewing betel-nut.

When it became known that I was a doctor, I was besieged by women whose ear-lobes had been pulled down by heavy ear-rings until they had split. I sewed up a great many—a little job at which I was an adept, for I should not like to say how many ears split in the same manner I have sewn up in China. At Pakhoi, boat-women used to stream to the surgery, with the lobes of their ears split right down by the weight of their ear-rings. So many of them came and it took up so much time that, eventually, I had to make a small charge—for it was really 'beauty culture', I

told them. The Shan women were immensely pleased, but they fought shy of my camera—unlike the Chinese—and I had great difficulty in getting a snap-shot.

There was, of course, plenty of gambling going on. The Shans, it seemed, were as inveterate gamblers as the Chinese. Where there is a market, there are sure to be gambling booths, and, as any fair-sized town holds a market three days a week, there was no lack of opportunity.

In the inns we had become so accustomed to the noise of the Mah-jong players clapping their pieces over on the table with the swift sweep of the hands of the accomplished, that we hardly noticed it any more than a boy playing diabolo or flying a kite, or the familiar greeting of the road:—"Have you eaten rice?"

Here, besides the ordinary 'fan-tan', I saw Shan farmers buying lottery tickets for a gamble called the 'Thirty-six Animals'. Hung up, where all could see, was a diagram picturing the animals, from the centre of which sprang a miniature bamboo tree, from which dangled a box. When sufficient tickets had been sold, the box was opened, and the name of the winning animal disclosed.

We had expected to find a rest-house at Man Hsein, but it had already been commandeered by Chinese soldiers. So we spent our last night in China in an inn, which was perhaps artistically appropriate, if not so clean or commodious.

We were now down to just below 3,000 feet, and only twelve miles from the Burmese frontier.

CHAPTER XXXVI

# TO PA CHIDO. *Banana Village*

*Wednesday, April 16th*

STARTING from Man Hsein at 5.15 a.m., we came into the jungle-covered mountains of the Taping Gorge.

We continually heard the monkeys chattering, and at one place six langurs swung over the road a hundred yards ahead. The birds were fascinating, many of very bright colours, but those which attracted us most were large white birds with coloured beaks and bands of black towards the tips of their wings. These birds flew slowly, then hovered with slow beats, like huge butterflies.

Deep in these jungles roam the wild elephants and rhinoceros—Polo's 'unicorn'. Our men told us that the rhinoceros, though they wallow by the large rivers, are fond of ranging the mountains, and that the people of the hills, when they travel, go as much in fear of a rhinoceros as a tiger. At certain times of the year, when the rhinoceros are particularly ferocious, they will chase a man if they think he is hunting them, and, with amazing perseverance, should they tree their quarry, they will take their stand beneath the tree for three or four days without respite.

We were just hoping we should not meet one suddenly round a corner, when we heard a loud tinkling of bells, and, rounding a bluff, we found the noise heralded a caravan of bullocks. The bells, which are useful for giving warning ahead on the blind corners, serve also to scare the jungle beasts. One or two of the finest bullocks carried little pagodas of chimes on their backs. We learnt from the merchant with them, who was the Burmese counterpart of Chaucer's merchant who rode to Canterbury, that their loads consisted of cigar wrappers, the leaf for which is cultivated in the Southern Shan States.

We wound and looped round precipitous hills, and at nine-thirty came to a little iron bridge across a mountain stream—the boundary between China and Burma.

There was not a sign of life anywhere—not a guard, not a customs house, not a policeman, not a living soul. The way was open to all. How different from the entrance between French Indo-China and China!

It gave an impression of the tolerance of the British spirit, of British freedom and security.

The change in the road surface was immediate. The telegraph posts suddenly became straight and set at regular intervals. The wires were no longer festooned through boughs or attached to trees.

So it was good-bye to the old paved road. The paving itself, though execrable in parts, gave a definite proof of how important the Old Burma Road had once been. 'Good for ten yards and bad for ten thousand,' to misquote the old saying, seemed to us the state of affairs.

In the plains, where the population was sufficiently wealthy to subscribe to its upkeep, it was in fair order; but in outlying and hilly districts it was used as a ready-made quarry by anyone whose house or garden wall required repair. Where the rain-water had washed it into the semblance of a river-bed, it was amazing how the mules managed to negotiate it at all.

It was a relief to us to be able to walk without having to look down to see where we were stepping all the time, in order to avoid stones of all shapes and sizes or yawning holes. In some places the paved road was certainly preferable to the morasses through which it gave firm passage.

One wondered how the elephants ever surmounted the difficulties of the road, hundreds of years ago. Still more wonderful is the way in which the Chinese have surmounted their difficulties in the construction of their new road.

The Old Road! Three such simple short words, but what a pageantry of the past they conjure up! Like an old palimpsest, from which one story is erased, and a new one written.

The oldest story, of which we have authentic knowledge, is that of Marco Polo; who travelled over parts if not all of it, and told stories of many of the places on the Old Burma Road when Edward I was King of England.

We came to the conclusion that many of the places and many of the ways of the people had changed little in those hundreds of years. Indeed, probably, if one wrote 930 instead of 1930, they would have been the same.

Polo said that at Yunnan-Fu he found Nestorian Christians; salt from the wells which produced revenue; and pickled fowls. After travelling 'ten days west', he came to Yachi–Tali-Fu. Here he tells of serpents (alligators) with eyes larger than a

fourpenny loaf, caught near the lake for their gall, used as a cure for mad-dog bites and carbuncles, and for the aiding of child-birth. 'The people ride with long stirrups, like the French,' he says, 'but the Tartars used them short so as to be able to rise in their stirrups to use their bows and arrows'; and robbers killed comely wayfarers, but the Great Khan had taken measures to suppress the horrid practice.

Five days more towards the 'occident', he came to Vochang —Yuan Chang. The people covered their teeth with gold and their arms and legs with tattoo stripes; the men thought of nothing but the chase and the women attended to everything else. He describes the custom that the French call *couvade;* and the ways of the sorcerers, who required offerings of rich food upon which to feast to the health of the petitioner, and, if the promised benefits did not materialise, the charm was cancelled, they declared, by the victuals having been tasted before they had them, and they demanded more. Polo mentions a district so 'gloomy and unwholesome, that in the summer season merchants and strangers fly from it'. He is very exact in his history of the battle between the Great Khan's horsemen and the King of Burma's elephants, which took place some little time before his visit.

On his way again, he tells of how the hill people come down to the markets in the plains; and, eventually, of the marble pagodas, and of the wild elephants and 'unicorns' that abound in the forests near Burma.

Although he did not mention it in this tour, his remarks about goitre were of interest to me.

So we came to Pa Chido, *Banana Village*, in Burma.

We expected to find a decent place to sleep in, but our fondest expectations had not imagined the comfortable rest-house we found—an airy well-furnished house, with dining-room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and kitchen. Everything was supplied but bedding and knives and forks.

The caretaker was on the look-out for us, and quickly opened up the place, which was spotlessly clean. He soon had baths and tea ready for us, and as the house was built on a hill, whilst we drank our tea we could enjoy the fine view. Below us was a neat village where thatched roofs took the place of the long-familiar curved roofs of China; and the white pagodas stood out like those bulbous old scent bottles with tapering tops,

instead of the many-storeyed pagodas to which we had become so used.

At bedtime, all that had to be done was to roll out our bedding on substantial well-made bedsteads, and to put up our mosquito nets.

What a relief it was to be able to sleep without fear of vermin, and for me on a bed that I knew would not give way. My camp bed had only outlasted the journey by use of the utmost caution in getting in and out, and I had for so long been able to turn over only with extreme care. I had developed quite a knack in maintaining its equilibrium; but, if I forgot, I would find myself sliding to the ground, or the bed would collapse beneath me with a creaking groan. Quite humorous in retrospect, but maddening at the time!

When a thunderstorm came in the night, and the rain rattled like lead pellets on the galvanised roof, it was a blessing not to have to leap up and 'lash and stow'—in the words of the bosun of old, which shot the sailors out of their hammocks.

CHAPTER XXXVII

# TO THE P.W.D. BUNGALOW AT KULONG-KA

*Thursday, April 17th*

WE were up and off early again. The going was pleasant with no dust. By a splendid 'made' road we passed through wild country. A thousand feet below the Taping River flowed, broad and strong, and the high mountains around us were clothed with thick jungle of immense creepers and teak trees.

By nine-forty-five, we had done half the day's stage. We rested our ponies for a couple of hours and had a snack, and then pushed on, mounted for the rest of the way.

Each day, as we got lower and lower, the weather got hotter and hotter; the climate of Yunnan being temperate, but that of Burma tropical. For although Upper Burma and Yunnan lie in the same latitude, Yunnan lies at a much higher altitude, which results in a perfect climate.

We arrived at the Public Works Department bungalow at Kulong-Ka about one o'clock. It was another prettily-situated house, but not quite so spick and span as the last, which had lately been done up for an official visit.

We had a long, lazy afternoon, and turned in early. It seemed so quiet and silent, and I believe we quite missed the sound of the bickering of the mules, the bleating of the goats, the squeaking of the pigs, the barking of the dogs, and the crowing of the cocks, and all the other noises inseparable from the life of a Chinese inn.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

# TO BHAMO

*Friday, April 18th*

ON Good Friday morning we were up very early, and full of excitement at being so near our journey's end . . . the tramping part of it at any rate. Tramps we must have looked! We had worn out a lot of shoe-leather, anyway, and were in peril of finding ourselves in Christopher Sly's plight, with more feet than shoes.

Our muleteers had behaved splendidly. As a gang they seemed as jolly as Thunder Cloud, their leader. There were no grumbles; they were always ready to start or to stop as we wished, and to help about anything.

No more packing or unpacking of our cumbrous gear after today. No more worries about deciding what we should eat from our rather scanty store.

The road had the same excellent surface. It wound gently, with easy gradients, mostly downhill, through country of luxuriant jungle growth.

We soon demolished the first thirteen miles on foot, and when we reached a cross-roads, there was an imposing stone marked 'Bhamo 17 miles'.

It was here that the Consul had arranged for a car to meet us. As we were ahead of time, we unloaded the mules and had an early lunch. It was actually only 9.15 a.m., and the car was not due until eleven o'clock, but we were not quite certain that the Consul's message had got through, and we wanted to be rested so as to be able to go on should the car not turn up.

Just as we were thinking we had better make a move, a bus arrived. After questioning the driver it appeared, however, that he knew nothing about an order to meet us. He offered to take us into Bhamo for six rupees—about 9s.—which seemed to us to be reasonable!

We had only gone a few miles when we met a car sent for us by the Commissioner of Bhamo; with a letter asking us to have tea and dinner with him and his wife that day.

On arrival at the Circuit House, we found it shining with new paint, having lately been done up for a visit from the Governor. After tea with the Commissioner and a visit to the club, we were entertained at a large dinner-party.

Then, under the electric light at the Circuit House, we sorted our baggage and packed, and said good-bye to the faithful Ah Yang. He was returning the next day to Yunnan-Fu, over the same road. I was glad I was not!

I do not mean that the experiences we had been through were not worth while. Indeed they were. Besides enjoying the fun of the road, I had accomplished what I had set out to do.

It had been of great interest to me to visit the various Missionary headquarters, meet the missionaries, hear of the work that had been accomplished and of their ideas for the future.

I had seen for myself the immense tracts of opium cultivation; and I had gathered much useful data about the prevailing illnesses of the people.

Goitre, the result of the lack of iodine in the soil and therefore in the vegetables, was everywhere. Some simple and universal method of substituting the deficiency was the only remedy. The latest suggestion for the cure of goitre is that imported iodine should be introduced into the Yunnan salt at the source of supply. The quantity estimated to prevent goitre is only one in three thousand. For the treatment of the entire Yunnan output, therefore, only about twenty tons of iodine products per year would be required. There should be no difficulty about this—in peace-time.

With regard to tuberculosis, the high, healthy tablelands of Yunnan do not favour the growth; but the stuffy rooms in all Chinese houses, of both rich and poor alike, encourage the spread of the disease. Little sunshine or fresh air ever reaches the sleeping quarters, and, as a result of this close living in the houses, one case will soon infect other persons.

I constantly came across cases which should have been isolated. This would have prevented the spreading of the disease. If full advantage had been taken of the sun and fresh air of the mountains, the patient would have had every chance of recovery. It is difficult to persuade the public, even in England, that fresh air and as much sunshine as possible will work wonders. It will not be an easy task to remedy the age-long habits and stuffy rooms of the Chinese.

Typhus, described in English Medical books as Jail Fever, I found to be as prevalent in the villages along the Burma Road as in all other parts of China that I knew. The vermin, so general and so ready to feed upon the human body, are mostly respon-

sible for the spreading of the infection. Cleanliness is the only preventative. The old saying, 'Keep your powder dry and trust in God', for soldiers might well run, 'Keep your houses and bodies clean and trust in God', for those who wish to secure immunity. As the people have to be taught the necessity of fresh air, so also must the necessity of universal cleanliness be taught. The number of doctors and nurses who, in attending typhus cases, have been infected and died from contact with typhus patients in their filthy homes is tragic—I have known case after case where one after the other have succumbed.

We had completed our journey of eight hundred miles in forty days; this included eight days when we had made stays at different places; so the actual travelling had taken us thirty-one.

Our journey on the Burma Road was over—but we were off on a new journey on the morrow. On that new journey I started armed with the determination to take up anew all the initiative I could muster to help to bring aid to the Chinese people amongst whom I had lived and wandered. Our plans for bringing help to them must be improved, our efforts redoubled. The magnitude of their misery must not baffle us, but spur us on to fight their ignorant beliefs and unhealthy habits.

The Chinese people are a grand people fundamentally. They value family love and family ties highly. They have great endurance and tenacity. They have a sense of humour. Surely they are worth every help that we can offer them.

In the old days, the Chinese considered themselves the people of the Middle Kingdom—the centre of the world. They resented intrusion; they resented new ideas. All that is altered, and it is up to us now to see that any new ideas that we offer them are the right ideas—Christian beliefs, Christian behaviour, Christian care.

As the New Road is an improvement on the Old Road, keeping those parts which are of value, and substituting other parts of genuine improvement, let us see that the new way leads with good will and mutual aid to "the forward march of the common people in all lands towards their just and true inheritance and towards the broader and fuller age".